Commentary

Volume Seventy-one, Number Four, April 1981

The Future Danger

Norman Podhoretz

Ideology and Supply-Side Economics

Irving Kristol

FRANCE
vs. ISRAEL
Sally
Baumann
Reynolds

HAVING BABIES AGAIN
Naomi Munson

...WHO MADE ME A WOMAN"
George Jochnowitz

"U.S. SECURITY AND LATIN AMERICA"
Jeane Kirkpatrick & Critics

MOVIES:
APOLEON CONQUERS AMERICA
Richard Grenier

FICTION:
JAMES MICHENER'S DOCUDRAMAS
Pearl K. Bell

BOOKS:
Samuel Lipman
Hyam Maccoby
Stephen Miller
Maurice Friedberg
Jack N. Rakove

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Commentary

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Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.75, $27 a year; 3 years $72; 5 years $108—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Publication Number ISSN 0010-2601
EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

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Letters from Readers

"U.S. Security & Latin America"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jeane Kirkpatrick's article, "U.S. Security & Latin America" [January], is disappointing. She has a reputation as a scholar and yet the article is superficial, polemical, filled with innuendoes unbecoming an Ambassador, and laden with factual errors that could have been corrected not by archival research but by a phone call or a dialogue which many of us in the Carter administration would have welcomed. Ambassador Kirkpatrick will soon find that one of the great frustrations of government service is not criticism *per se*, but criticism based on a *misrepresentation* of the facts or one's views. I might add here that I was a staff member of the National Security Council in the Carter administration from 1977 to 1981, concerned with Latin American and Caribbean affairs, and also executive director of the Linowitz Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations (1975-76).

Regrettably, it is not possible to respond in a single letter to all the issues raised in her article, which is a sweeping criticism of President Carter's approach to Latin America and the Caribbean, or all the mistakes it contains. For now, let me address five points which will, I hope, illuminate the thrust of her critique and the outlines of Carter's approach:

1. *Special Relationship.* Ambassador Kirkpatrick correctly asserts that Carter discarded the rhetoric of the "special relationship" and placed U.S. policy in the region in "a consistent global framework," but incorrectly, she suggests that the consequences of the new approach "meant deemphasizing U.S. relations" with Latin America and reducing U.S. assistance.

Whatever one thinks about Carter's policy in Latin America and the Caribbean, no one with any knowledge of the region or of the history of U.S. policy can make the case that Carter deemphasized U.S. relations in the region. Jimmy Carter made ten major speeches on the region; he met with almost every head of state, many of them several times, and maintained a regular dialogue and frequent correspondence; he traveled to the region three times and sent Mrs. Carter and Vice President Mondale as his personal representatives seven times and the Secretary of State on an additional six trips. With the possible exception of President Kennedy, Carter gave more sustained attention to the region than any previous President. Moreover, in the one sub-region Ambassador Kirkpatrick cares most about, Carter quadrupled aid to Central America and more than doubled aid to the Caribbean (and through the multinational Caribbean Group, which was established largely at Carter's initiative, all external aid flows to the region quadrupled, to exceed $1 billion).

Increased attention permitted the Carter administration to see that the "special relationship," to which Ambassador Kirkpatrick would like to return, was unsuited to the diversity within the region or the role many Latin American nations were playing internationally. At best, the "special relationship" had become just a rhetorical flourish; at worst, it was symptomatic of an outmoded paternalism, where we gave less, but expected more, where we treated the nations of the region as "wards" in "our sphere of influence."

The Carter administration's decision to place U.S. relations with Latin America in a "consistent, global framework" was a recognition of this reality: the nations of Latin America had too much of a stake in the global economic and political system to think that we could induce them to return to "our" hemisphere. Latin American nations wanted to be treated on the basis of mutual respect in addressing the global issues—trade, investment, technology—of greatest interest to them. The Carter administration judged that we were more likely to obtain the region's cooperation if we consulted regularly and sought balanced relationships—comparable to our relations with Western Europe—than if we resurrected the rhetoric or the paternalism of the past.

2. *Panama Canal Treaties.* Carter's commitment to new Canal treaties was viewed as a demonstration of his interest in more balanced and modern relationships. If the Carter administration attached great importance to them—as Ambassador Kirkpatrick notes sarcas-

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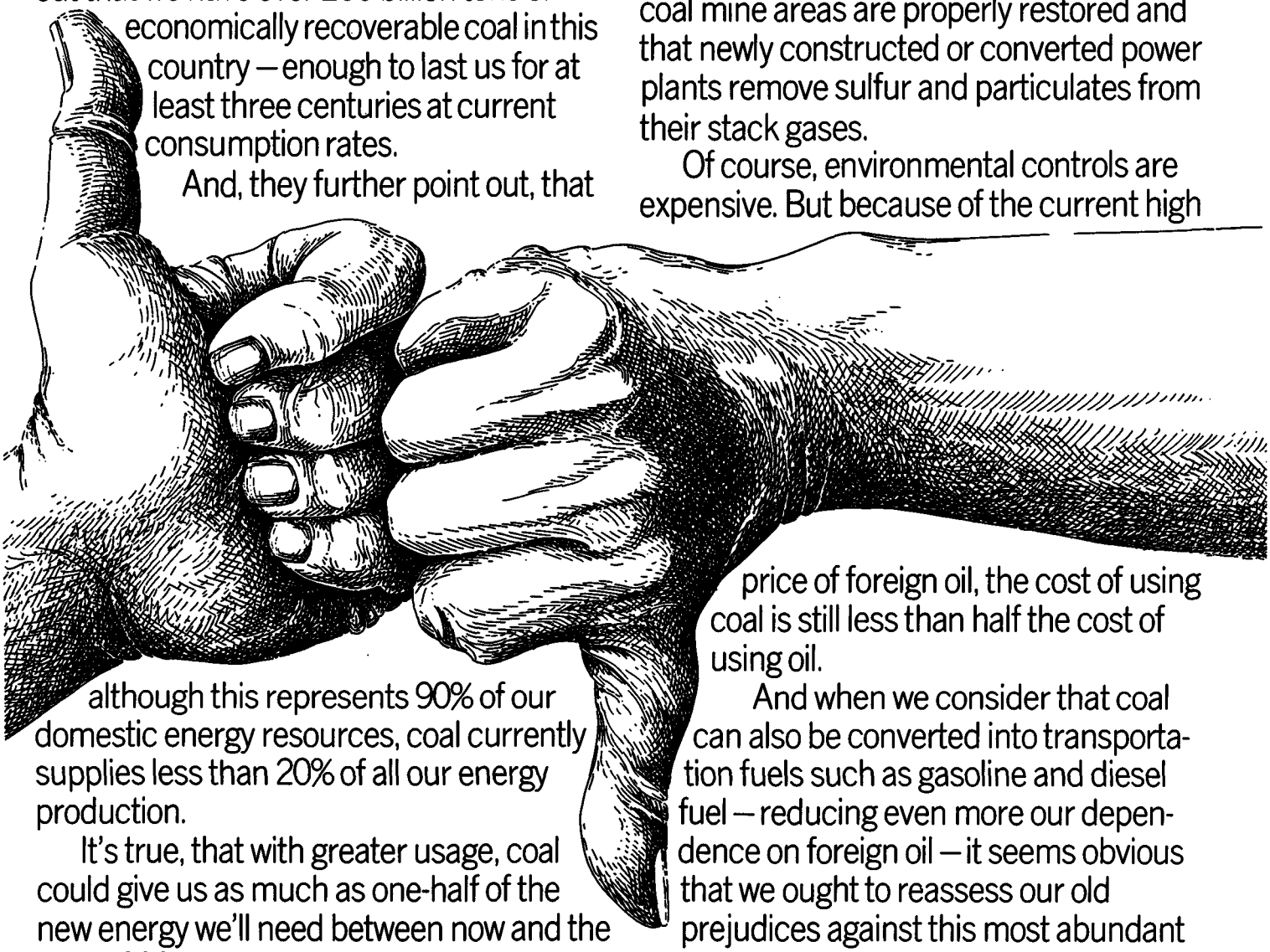

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tically—it was in part to sell them to an American public which did not see or understand the disastrous consequences for U.S. interests in the Canal and in Latin America if the treaties had not been ratified.

3. *Human Rights.* The two points Ambassador Kirkpatrick makes about U.S. human-rights policy are in error.

She writes: "First, concern was limited to violations of human rights by governments. By definition, activities of terrorists or guerrillas could not qualify as violations. . . ." Carter administration officials frequently condemned both terrorism and government repression; the distinction in policy derived partly from the fact that we have relations with governments not with terrorists, and secondly, that we should hold governments to a higher responsibility, not only, to cite Carter, "because their power is so much greater than that of any individual," but also because "the first duty of a government is to protect its citizens."

Secondly, she criticizes the broad definition of human rights for including economic and social rights as well as personal and political rights, and she makes the rather startling suggestions that promoting such rights is akin to promoting socialism. These rights are not Carter's creation; they are defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights. U.S. policies placed greatest weight on behalf of the right of the person to be free of arbitrary violence, but we did not ignore the importance of the other rights.

4. *Bolivia.* Her assertion that the Carter administration supported Siles Suazo ("the American candidate") in the Bolivian presidential elections is false. Carter administration policy on elections was absolutely clear in concept and in implementation: we were partial to free and fair elections and impartial with respect to candidates. It is distressing that she has also apparently accepted the groundless, self-serving justification which General Garcia Meza used to seize power—that he did so to prevent Siles, a former President of Bolivia during the Eisenhower administration and a democrat, from establishing a Castroite-Communist government.

5. *Nicaragua.* The major part of her article is devoted to explaining why the Carter administration "brought down the Somoza regime." Her answer: "Because it thought the fall of Somoza would bring progress to Nicaragua."

Somoza fell of his own corrupt and repressive weight, and because there was practically no one in Nicaragua or outside who could bring himself to defend him. Indeed, within Nicaragua, the moderate democratic parties, the Church the independent labor unions, and most importantly the business sector actively sought to overthrow him, preferring the risks of a future with the Sandinistas to a present with Somoza. Outside, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama agreed: Somoza was the problem; his departure was the answer. It is ironic that she accuses Carter of destabilizing Somoza while the majority of the OAS governments suspected that we were secretly defending him. Neither charge is correct.

When the business sector shut down Managua for the second time in a general strike in August 1978 and the middle class lined the streets to cheer the Sandinistas as they were escorted to the airport after their takeover of the National Palace, it was clear that the people of Nicaragua had had enough with forty years of Somoza rule. Somoza's hold on power became more tenuous—not firmer—as a result of the extraordinarily repressive, inhuman tactics of his National Guard, documented in the report of the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Because the situation seemed so clearly headed for radicalization and a bloody denouement, the U.S. joined with two other governments in the fall of 1978 to try to mediate a moderate, peaceful solution. The mediation was initially successful in permitting the centrist groups to organize as an independent force and to supplant the guerrillas as the key actor in the opposition, but Somoza deluded himself into thinking that the temporary lull in the fighting was permanent, and he sabotaged the mediation, pushing the middle to the Left.

Somoza created a popular movement which could agree on little else other than removing him. Whatever reservations the Carter administration had about the Sandinistas—and these are well-documented—we were not foolish enough to think that U.S. support for Somoza would have led to anything but our being dragged with him into an indefensible and unwinnable war.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick suggests that a right-wing dictator is preferable to a Communist dictator, but if she is talking about Nicaragua, she is missing the point, and not just because the current government—in power for 19 months—is not Communist now, and with continued efforts by moderate groups there and the right international environment, need never become so. If we had supported Somoza, we would not only have found ourselves opposed by Nicaraguan businessmen, labor, moderate politicians, the Church, and most of democratic Latin America, we would also have betrayed our principles and our ideals (i.e., a reason we oppose the Communists), and the cost to human life would have been many times the 50,000 who died. Moreover, we would have embraced a loser.

Her analysis implies that the U.S. and Cuba were the only two relevant actors in Nicaragua—that Cuba directed the revolution, and the U.S. could have prevented it. The people of Nicaragua are missing; her article provides no clue to the question of why thousands of Nicaraguans preferred to risk death rather than to have stability under the Somoza regime. This is the most disturbing aspect of her article—her seeming inability to understand the local causes of the instability in Central America, the limits of U.S. power and the nature of U.S. influence, and the fact that the U.S. has interests which are more extensive than anti-Communism. The instability will not go away even if the Cubans do.

The dilemma of what to do with a failing but "friendly" dictator remains. An emphasis on stability and a resistance to change is not the formula. U.S. options are few. We can go down with the dictator. We can distance ourselves from him and try to work with the more moderate elements of the new leadership, as we have tried to do in Nicaragua. Or we can work with the key centrist actors and try to prevent the situation from reaching the point where violent revolution is unstoppable. This last option can succeed only if that tragic country possesses leaders who can see clearly that the alternative to reform is revolution. That leadership did not exist in Nicaragua in 1978 and 1979; fortunately, it

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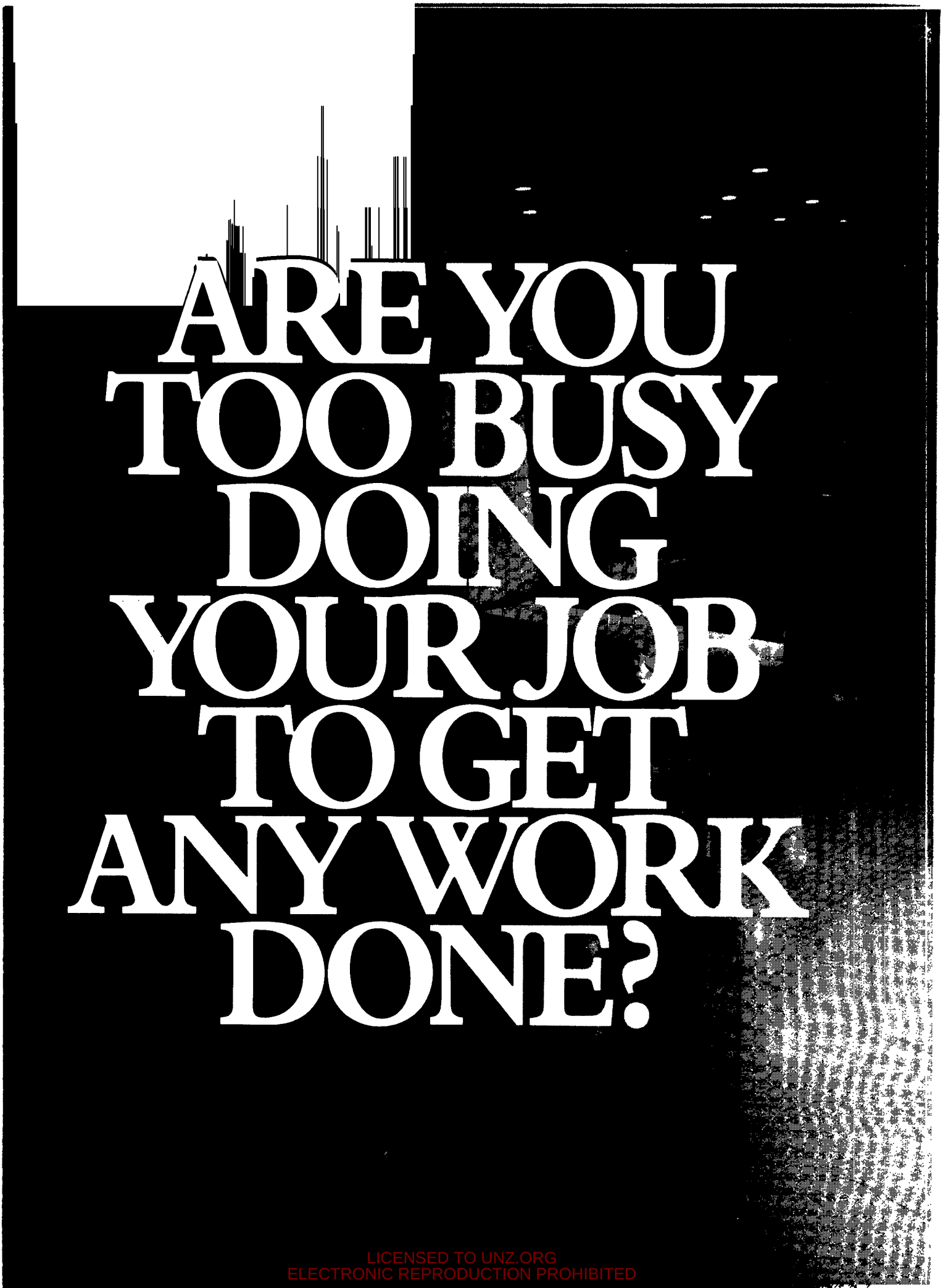

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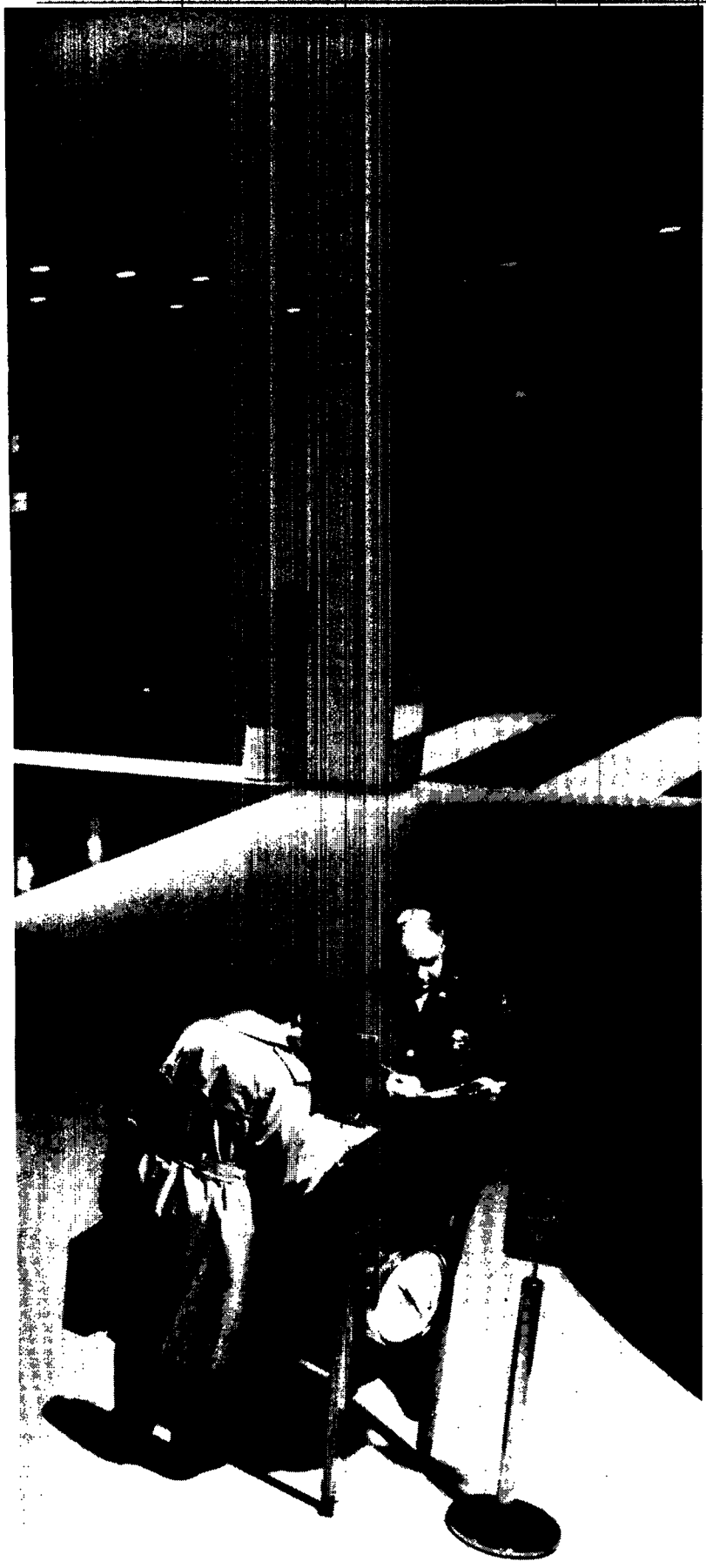

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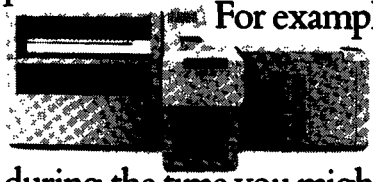

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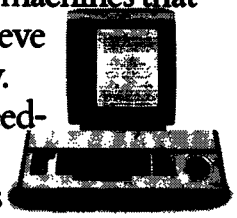

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existed in El Salvador in 1979 and 1980.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick's quest for stability in Central America is illusory; her fear of change betrays our nation's dynamism. The issue for U.S. foreign policy—and the one the Carter administration addressed—is not whether to encourage change or to resist it, but rather how to relate to it in a way which will increase the probability that the outcome is compatible with U.S. interests. To lead, we have to deal with the world as it is and as we would want it to become, not as it once was.

ROBERT PASTOR
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a scientist, I spend quite a lot of time analyzing facts. Unfortunately, Jeane Kirkpatrick does not. A major point in her historical analysis is based on the "fact" that U.S. assistance to the countries of Latin America declined steadily during the Carter years. This decline is then argued to have contributed significantly to the current revolutionary crisis. . . . But this decline is a myth. Between 1977 and 1979 U.S. government assistance to Latin America tripled—from $577 million to $1.86 billion. A quick glance at the data for some relevant countries is revealing. Aid to Somoza's Nicaragua totaled $9.8 million in 1977 and rose to $27.4 million in 1979 before the Sandinistas came to power. Likewise, aid to El Salvador tripled from $8.8 million in 1977 to around $25 million in 1980—hardly a decline in most people's calculus. Ambassador Kirkpatrick's rewriting of history (especially serious now that she is representing the U.S. at the United Nations) reminds me of a book I once read by George Orwell.

I agree that U.S. policy should be based on realism. But realism has to take the facts into account, even if they don't fit into a particular world view. . . .

DAVE VAN BUREN
University of California
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her "U.S. Security & Latin America" Jeane Kirkpatrick displays the limited vision typical of nearly all Reagan appointments in the foreign-policy area. Her analysis of problems in Nicaragua assigns all guilt to Communist-affiliated terrorists, omitting what every objective historian of the area recognizes: that Somoza's own murderous repression was the chief inspiration for the Sandinista movement, starting with his treacherous assassination of the movement's original leaders. Her approach to El Salvador is equally misleading; she mentions the murders of visiting American nuns without any adequate sense of the strong evidence that these and similar killings of peace-loving people in that country were performed primarily by right-wing terrorists, not Communists.

The most appalling shortcoming of her article, as of the Reagan-Haig approach to foreign policy in general, is the total absence of emphasis on the degree to which the countries of Central America are economic colonies of American corporations. Coffee, cotton, bananas, beets, and other products which we could easily do without are produced for export on the best half of the land, funneling income either out of the area or into the hands of its repressive elites, and pressuring the bulk of the population to squeeze out a meager existence crowded onto poor land. In short: U.S. policy promotes a policy leading to certain revolution.

To accuse the Carter administration of turning its back on the status quo in Latin America is at best a vast exaggeration. . . . In the article, Carterism is confused with McGovernism; but in fact the kind of sympathy with repressed minorities abroad that McGovern recommended has never been tried to any serious degree by any American government. Until it is, our foreign relations will necessarily continue to deteriorate, especially in the Third World.

JOHN E. CHAPPELL, JR.
San Luis Obispo, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As with her COMMENTARY essay of November 1979 ["Dictatorships & Double Standards"], Jeane Kirkpatrick centers her arguments in her current article on the paradigm built of the events surrounding the Nicaraguan coup. After defending at length the hardly controversial point that Somoza's continuation in power would have been in American interests, she forcefully asserts that Carter, by himself, *"brought down the Somoza regime"* (emphasis in original). In Ambassador Kirkpatrick's book, anyway, it was child's play to fell the autocrat, and the entire episode happened because Carter voiced disapproval of the human-rights violations under Somoza's regime, and because the U.S. withheld aid at a time when Somoza needed it most. . . .

On the topic of U.S. aid, Ambassador Kirkpatrick's argument is a house of cards, whose façade tumbles with the slightest prod. The fact is, of course, that even if we had not reduced aid, the level maintained previously would still have been inadequate to insure Somoza's survival—a fact that was shown at the time by the increasing ferocity of his Sandinista opponents. Not that anyone maintains that the fall could not have been averted (or at least deferred) given extreme commitment and desire on our part to sacrifice to such an end. But the point that the article skirts is that to preserve this dictatorship, the U.S. would have been forced to increase its involvement dramatically; the question of self-interest is pushed to the side and perhaps military intervention—i.e., U.S. troop commitment—would have proved necessary in the end. In this post-Vietnam era, perhaps Americans could be forgiven if they drew back from such a prospect.

There is another complicating factor to the Nicaraguan dilemma which, surprisingly, received no mention in Ambassador Kirkpatrick's treatment of the subject. As several people have pointed out, the dramatic escalation of aid that Somoza's survival would have necessitated is the kind of action that does not occur in a vacuum—it would have had specific repercussions. The Cubans, for example, whose own support to the Sandinistas seems to have been considerable, would plausibly have met such an act with a corresponding increase in their own aid. . . . To say the least, the resulting spiral would have been undesirable, unsupported by the majority of Americans, and ultimately unmaintainable. We simply cannot pretend that we are willing to go as far as the Cuban adventurists in the effort to manipulate global events. . . . Faced with such bleak prospects, Carter took the option of standing back for the conflict to resolve itself. There is no question that it was a sound choice. . . .

Given the likelihood (for reasons beyond our control) that the conflict would not be resolved in our favor, Carter made gestures, in necessarily Machiavellian fashion, that could be construed as a repudia-

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tion of the autocrat. For example, he spoke of his genuine concern over human-rights violations, and took other measures to signify his alienation from the foundering Somoza regime. Ambassador Kirkpatrick, mistaking these gestures for the *cause* of Somoza's downfall, asks why. Yet the answer is plain to anyone reading the obvious signs: when one knows, as only the President could know, that the Sandinista junta would soon have mastery, it makes little sense not to lay the groundwork for possible future friendly relations, and thus gain influence with the incoming administration. . . .

"U.S. Security & Latin America" argues for pragmatism in the national interest. But it is neither pragmatic nor in the nation's interest to fight to the bloody end in an effort to prop up a failing autocrat who has been rejected by his own people. Still, it is not hard to criticize the tough decisions that Carter made. . . . What is more difficult . . . is realizing why they were necessary. I only hope that Ambassador Kirkpatrick's role in the Reagan administration will lead her to a fuller appreciation of the difficulties that the actual conduct of foreign policy involves.

HENRY D. FINDER
Loudonville, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jeane Kirkpatrick opens her article with a call to arms to defend against a ". . . ring of Soviet bases" that will soon face the United States from the south. Surely Ambassador Kirkpatrick overstates her case. The Soviet naval facility at Cienfuegos in Cuba hardly constitutes a "ring" of bases. But Ambassador Kirkpatrick is fearful of new bases appearing in Nicaragua and in El Salvador, once that country falls to the Red Menace.

Like most analysts who approach U.S. foreign policy from the limited perspective of national security, she has difficulty distinguishing between national-liberation movements and the supposed international Communist monolith. To portray Nicaragua as a Cuban/Soviet puppet oversimplifies reality. True, the most radical elements of the ruling junta have been strongly influenced by the Cuban revolutionary model and have supported some Cuban/Soviet positions in international arenas, but, at the same time, the Nicaraguan government has made overtures to Washington demonstrating a desire to maintain its independence from the Communist bloc.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick is premature in pronouncing the Nicaraguan experiment a foreign-policy failure. It is critical at this juncture for the U.S. government to respond positively to these overtures to support the democratic elements of the revolution. To be sure, the United States can help to drive Nicaragua into the Cuban/Soviet camp by adopting the same rigidly anti-Communist positions of non-assistance that it adopted vis-à-vis Cuba in 1960. If the new Reagan team tries to block the $75-million aid package approved last summer for Nicaragua, the junta may have no alternative but to seek increased help from the Communists. Unfortunately, Ambassador Kirk-

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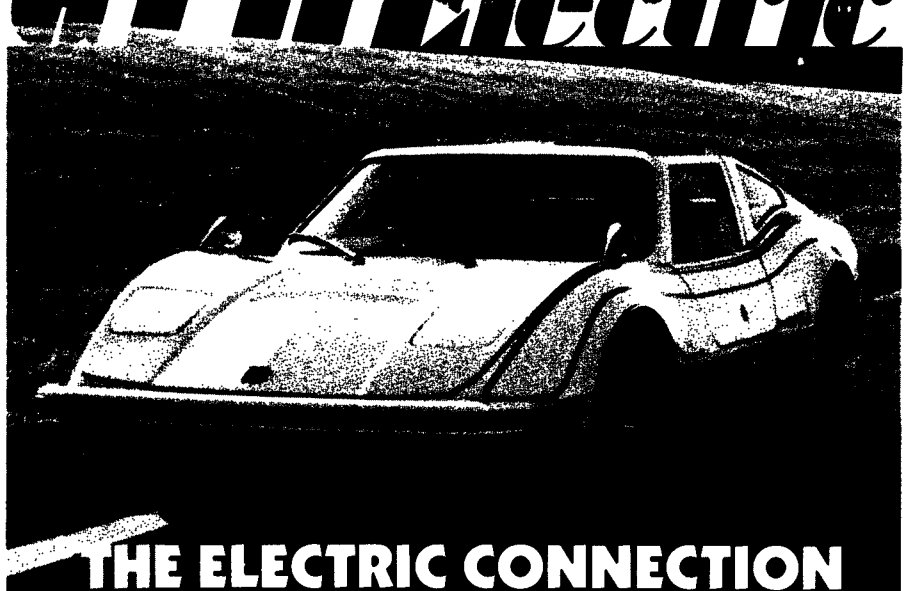

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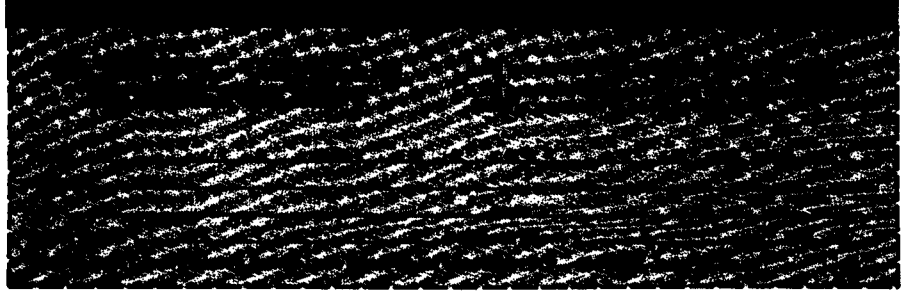

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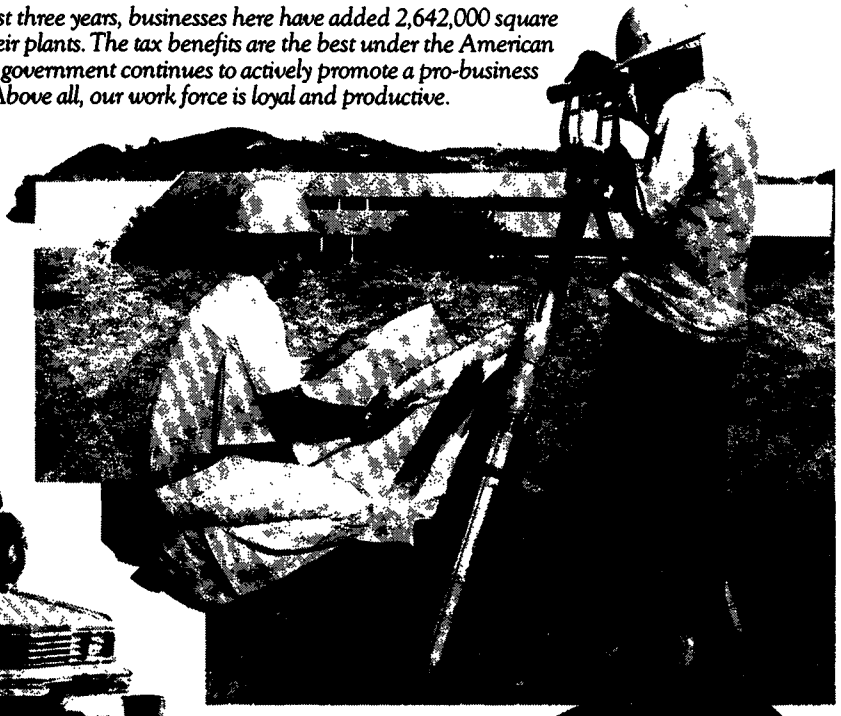

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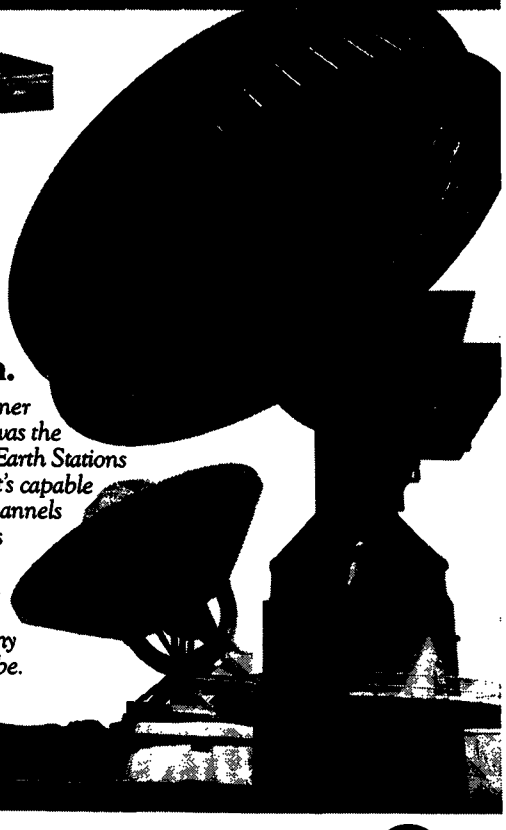

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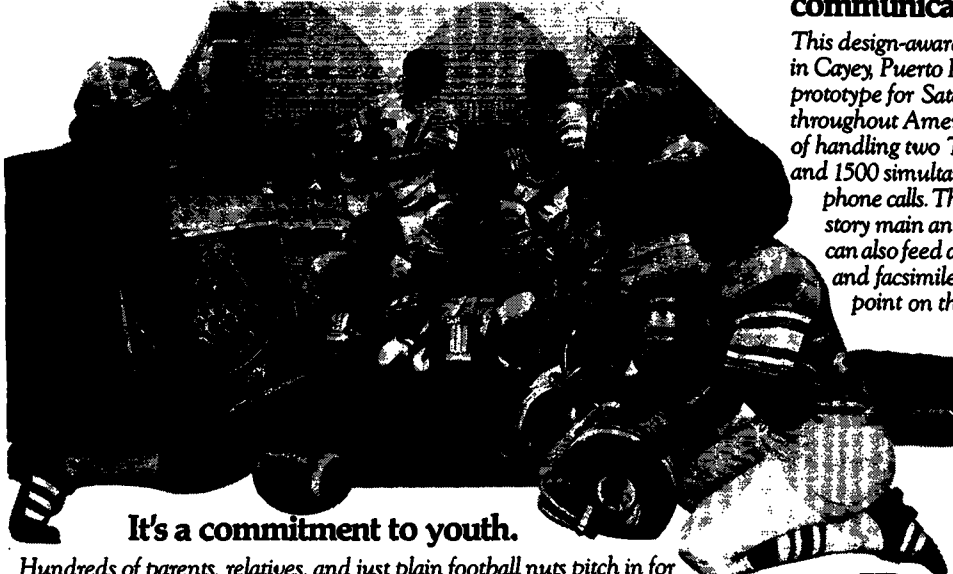

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patrick does not tell us what she would do about Nicaragua, but I hear strains of the Marine Corps Marching Band in her arguments.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick would no doubt argue that the current Nicaraguan problem would not exist but for the "affirmative pressures" of the Carter administration that resulted in Somoza's downfall. While the point is arguable, many analysts maintain that it was only a matter of time before Somoza fell, as the mounting opposition extended to both ends of the political spectrum. The only policy available to Washington that might have prolonged the Somoza regime would have been the massive infusion of U.S. military equipment and perhaps personnel. Ambassador Kirkpatrick would probably have advocated such a strategy, but it is precisely this strategy that has historically made the Cuban revolutionary model so attractive to progressive-minded Latin Americans. She suggests that continued support for Somoza, aside from assuring the United States an ally, would have spared Nicaragua a devastating civil war, but she completely ignores not only the thousands of lives that would have been lost in crushing the opposition (assuming that it could have been crushed) but also the continued economic and political oppression of the vast majority of Nicaraguans under the Somoza dynasty. It is an insidious distortion of reality to label the Somoza regime "... moderately oppressive and moderately corrupt." So long as the U.S. government supports Somoza-type regimes in Latin America, Latin Americans will desert the American camp and seek more radical solutions.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick prescribes three steps toward correcting United States-Latin American policy. Although she pays lip-service to the goal of improving the ". . . actual lives of actual people . . ." (one wonders whom she is talking about) in Latin America, her chief concern is with U.S. national security and hemispheric stability. While these are indisputably important goals of any U.S. foreign policy, I question whether her strategy of attempting to shore up corrupt dictatorships is really in the long-term interest of the United States. These dictatorships cannot last indefinitely and we alienate the future leaders of Latin America by our use of "big stick" diplomacy. Moreover, we must be honest with ourselves about the consequences of pursuing a foreign policy based exclusively on national security and hemispheric stability. In the context of Latin America, such a policy would not improve the quality of life for the average Latin American, but, rather, perpetuate the gross social, political, and economic inequalities that currently exist.

CARL VALENSTEIN
Ann Arbor, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am delighted that Ambassador Kirkpatrick mentions me by name in her article as one of the persons with whom she disagrees when it comes to defining what U.S. policy should be toward Latin America. I would have been very uncomfortable if anyone could imagine that she and I agreed on basics.

However, I am offended that she characterizes me, and the other "like-minded" persons she names, as advocates of "anti-American perspectives and revolutionary activism." Surely the debate on foreign policy can be carried on without having to impugn the patriotism of the other parties. If, however, Ambassador Kirkpatrick insists on maintaining this characterization, I would be glad to meet her in public debate to discuss who is really "anti-American."

BRADY TYSON
School of International Service
American University
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her otherwise excellent article, "U.S. Security & Latin America," Jeane Kirkpatrick implies that whereas the Carter administration *acted* to weaken Anastasio Somoza's government in Nicaragua, Washington merely failed "to prevent a given outcome" in the earlier cases of China and Cuba. It is clear from the record, however, that in both China and Cuba the State Department did act in ways that undermined friendly regimes and facilitated the victory of anti-American revolutionaries.

After his Nationalist forces inflicted a major defeat on the Chinese Communists in May 1946, Chiang Kai-shek tried to win the civil war in defiance of American pressure for concessions to the enemy. In response, from July 1946 to May 1947, the United States enforced an arms embargo against the Nationalists. The result was what Professor Richard C. Thornton (in his book, *China: The Struggle for Power*) describes as a "fundamental and fatal change" in Chiang's strategy. In an attempt to conserve ammunition, Chiang limited his offensive operations and emphasized the defense of positions already won, thus conceding the initiative to the Communist side.

In March 1958 the State Department imposed a similar arms embargo against Fulgencio Batista's government in Cuba. In his memoirs, entitled *The Fourth Floor*, Earl E.T. Smith—the U.S. Ambassador to Havana at the time—maintains that this American decision was psychologically "devastating" to the government and encouraging to the Castroites. In his book, *Dagger in the Heart: American Policy Failures in Cuba*, Mario Lazo describes the arms embargo as one of the "main events that brought Castro to power."

Ambassador Kirkpatrick's criticism of the Carter administration for its arms embargo against Somoza's Nicaragua is entirely justified, but Carter's blunder was not unique; using arms embargoes to weaken anti-Communist governments has become almost a tradition of American foreign policy. . . . It is reassuring to know that we can anticipate at least a four-year moratorium on new embargoes of this sort.

KENNETH H. W. HILBORN
University of Western Ontario
London, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Jeane Kirkpatrick is superb, as far as it goes. It is a long-awaited whiff of clean and uncontaminated air.

Alas! It does not go far enough, because it deals exclusively with Central America and has only a word or two to say about South America. While Central America and its burning issues are certainly important, there is an enormous difference in gravitational force between it and the South American countries. One could get a more accurate sense of things if one measured Latin American problems with a South American yardstick rather than with a Central American one. Nevertheless, a door has been opened and that is good.

PAUL HIRSCH
Buenos Aires, Argentina

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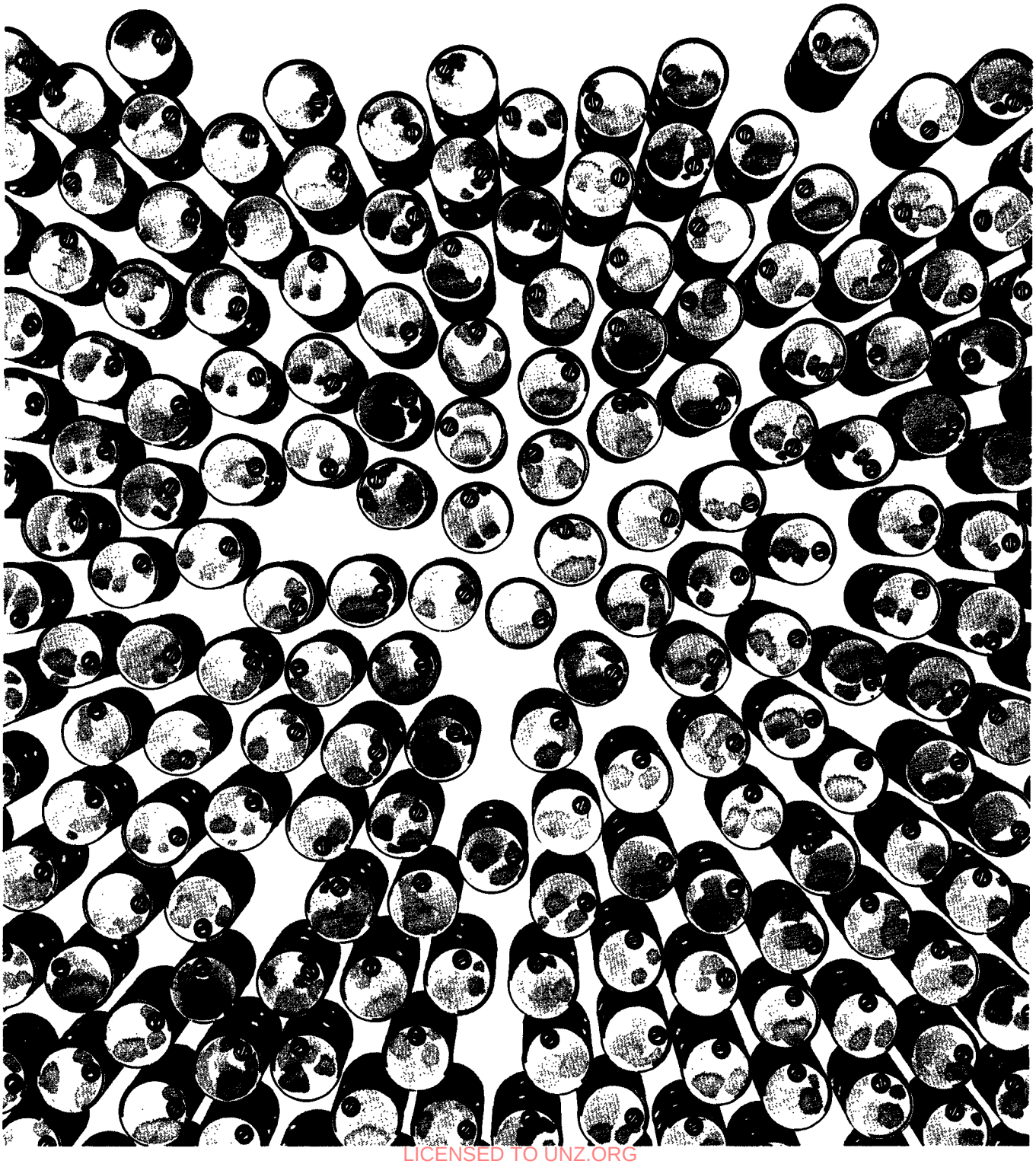

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jeane Kirkpatrick's "U.S. Security & Latin America" is the very model of a consequential case study. Though written in the white heat of the current crisis in the Caribbean, it has enduring value because it is rooted in a solid understanding of the limits and possibilities of human nature and politics. Ambassador Kirkpatrick grapples seriously with specific facts and confronts honestly the present danger. She is realistic without being cynical, compassionate without being sentimental.

The author's note identifying Ambassador Kirkpatrick mentions that her earlier COMMENTARY article, "Dictatorships & Double Standards" [November 1979], was "widely discussed." But this is an understatement. It was in fact this article that brought her thinking to the attention of Ronald Reagan and eventually led to her nomination as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

COMMENTARY readers may order "Dictatorships & Double Standards" in permanent pamphlet form for $1 from the Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1211 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

ERNEST W. LEFEVER
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Jeane Kirkpatrick's appointment should be greeted with joy by all Americans and friends of America who have been troubled by the former administration's envoys to the UN, whether the flamboyant Andrew Young, whose remark about "the stabilizing influence of the Cubans in Angola" may survive as the all-time nadir of U.S. diplomacy, or the inconspicuous Ambassador Donald McHenry. To judge from her writings, Ambassador Kirkpatrick may follow where Daniel P. Moynihan left off. It is true, the United Nations may have become an unimportant sideshow. But the performance of the U.S. Ambassador there is a yardstick of American dignity and resolve. . . .

Ambassador Kirkpatrick's most recent article is admirable proof of her no-nonsense grasp of the complex Central American and Caribbean situations. I would like to add a few remarks with regard to her discussion of El Salvador.

I admit that I am not entirely objective. Two years ago, in San Salvador, I was the house guest of an old friend, Don Ernesto Liebes, a companion in the struggle to win political backing first for the cause of a Jewish state, then later for Israel. He was for many years Israel's honorary Consul General in El Salvador. A month after my visit, Liebes was kidnapped. The guerrilla communiqué stated expressly that he had been selected *because* he was the Consul of Israel. His abductors demanded a ransom of $10 million and, when this was not forthcoming, executed their captive. At the time there existed no terror from the Right. The leftists had the field to themselves. The civil war was started by the leftists.

This information will probably not prevent those whose knee-jerk reflex is to back any leftist revolutionary movement against the "landowners and the middle class" from sympathizing with the guerrillas. I wonder, though, how many of these sympathizers are landless peasants themselves and how many of them are middle-class, which, in the guerrilla jargon, would make them "oligarchs." During another civil war, in another Latin American country, I was given the following definition of who, in the eyes of the revolutionaries, is an "oligarch": somebody who lives in a concrete house, owns a car, and has gone to college. How many of those guerrilla-sympathizers in this country meet these standards? . . . Does their concern for the peasants of El Salvador (many of whom are being ravaged by the guerrillas because they accepted a land reform the guerrillas labeled "insufficient") sentence their Salvadoran peers—the middle class—to live in a leftist, Castroist dictatorship which, undoubtedly, would be the result of a guerrilla victory?

There are unappetizing choices to be made in El Salvador and in other places. It is reassuring to know that the presence of Ambassador Kirkpatrick in the new administration may contribute to their being made wisely.

BENNO WEISER VARON
Brookline, Massachusetts

JEANE KIRKPATRICK writes:

Robert Pastor's letter is a useful reminder of what we—the nation and the world—were delivered from by the outcome of last November's elections. The combined elements of strong invective, weak argument, and a posture of moral superiority that became dismally familiar during the Carter years are all present.

As I understand him, Mr. Pastor argues: (1) that the Carter administration did *not* deemphasize relations with Latin America; (2) that it did *not* hold a deficient conception of human rights; (3) that Carter did *not* destabilize Nicaragua; and (4) that my methodology is inadequate and my article is filled with mistakes and misrepresentations.

Mr. Pastor's arguments seem to me as deficient as the policies they justify. First concerning the "special relationship": trips by government officials and spouses do not offset reductions in economic and military aid, reductions in education and scientific exchanges, imposition of severe curbs on arms sales, public scoldings, and high-handed diplomacy. Much of the sustained attention the Carter administration gave Latin America would have gladly been forgone by its recipients. Mr. Carter's 1977 trip to Brazil was not generally interpreted by Brazilians as evidence of friendly concern, especially when the U.S. President's cold behavior toward Brazil's military leader was contrasted with his warm embrace weeks later of Nigeria's military dictator. The reduction of economic and military assistance to Latin America was repeatedly affirmed by Carter policy-makers and is a matter of public record. To support his contention that the administration increased aid, Mr. Pastor has compared and assimilated non-comparable, non-assimilable categories.

Second, concerning the Carter conception of human rights, Mr. Pastor's statement itself tacitly acknowledges that coercion exercised by governments was judged more harshly than the violence of terrorists despite the historic view that, by virtue of their responsibility for maintaining order, governments possess a monopoly of legitimate force. Treating governments and terrorists as equals deprives the former of all claims to legitimacy.

Apparently, it seems to Mr. Pastor defense enough of Carter's overly broad conception of human rights to note that they are the rights "defined" by the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights. But those

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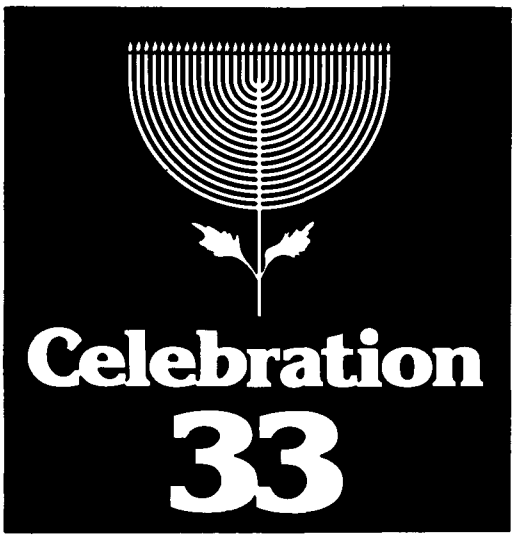

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definitions also stretch the concept of rights past the point of relevance to actual societies. In fact, real events can never be measured by utopian yardsticks.

As for Nicaragua, Mr. Pastor clings to the Carter interpretation of events: nothing that has happened since has altered his conviction that "Somoza was the problem; his departure was the answer." Moreover, Mr. Pastor claims that the Carter team both did *not* destabilize Nicaragua and that they had to do it. It may be that Somoza's repugnant regime would have fallen of its own weight. My point is that we will never know because Carter policy-makers did not wait to find out, but instead acted repeatedly to weaken that regime and strengthen its opponents.

Mr. Pastor remains undisturbed by the consequences of that policy. Nicaragua's regime, he assures us, is "not Communist now," and need not become so if only there is the "right international environment," presumably one that is filled with aid and understanding and no unreasonable demands concerning the willingness of the Sandinista leaders to hold elections, and/or their treatment of the private sector, and/or their multiple ties to the Soviet Union, and/or their intervention in El Salvador and elsewhere, and/or their human-rights record.

At present the Sandinista leaders control almost all the levers of power and are busily constructing institutional bases of totalitarian control, formally linking Nicaragua to the Soviet bloc of countries, building and equipping (with Soviet-bloc arms) an army and militia of unprecedented size, and mounting a clandestine radio station beamed at El Salvador into which have been shipped tons of weapons. Nicaragua may still be turned back from totalitarianism and full incorporation into the Soviet bloc, but such a hoped-for turn would require important changes in its ruling elite.

In evaluating Mr. Pastor's attitude, it should be emphasized that the political character and ambitions of the present rulers were manifested in a long series of policies adopted during the period that Carter, Pastor, and Pezzullo offered the Sandinista junta understanding and help. It will never be possible to say of the Sandinista rulers (as so many were and are wont to argue of Cuba) that only our failure to "understand" the revolution in its infancy caused it to turn to Moscow and repression.

These differences between Robert Pastor's views and mine are grounded in more basic disagreements. As I have argued elsewhere, Mr. Pastor apparently operates from the deterministic, unilinear model of development which locates the greater evil in the status quo and sees change as necessarily progressive. I share Mr. Pastor's repugnance for regimes like those of Somoza, but I lack his *faith* that they will necessarily be replaced by something better. The march of history, which is nothing more or less than the sum of human choices and actions, cannot be relied upon to produce progressive results. The beneficence of any movement or regime is finally determined not by its relation to history, but by the morality and consequences of its policies.

A final word on methodology: it is true that in thinking about foreign policy under the last administration I preferred to rely on the public record. The policies and their consequences were of far more concern to me than the motives of the actors. The public speeches and the testimony of principals before congressional committees laid out their understanding of what they were about. Other persons will at some point no doubt relate those policies to the personalities, perspectives, and interactions of the Carter foreign-policy elite. But that is another job for another day.

OF Dave Van Buren I will say only that his figures combine categories of financial transactions in a way that is misleading as to the nature of Carter policy. Lumping together foreign aid and financial loans made by persons and institutions outside government, and reading the total as a reflection of Carter administration policy, utterly distorts the relationship between policy and aid. The financial decisions of bankers about investment opportunities can hardly be interpreted as an intended consequence of Carter policies.

ON John E. Chappell, Jr.: I do not "assign all guilt" in Nicaragua to "Communist-affiliated terrorists." I argue to the contrary that the U.S. government under Jimmy Carter shares a good deal of that guilt, as does the Somoza regime itself. A still more basic difference divides Mr. Chappell and me; he apparently believes that U.S. economic colonialism leads to "certain revolution," never noticing what Plato emphasized two thousand years ago: that revolutions are caused and conducted not by the poor but by the imperfectly socialized sons of the elite. Neither does Mr. Chappell bother to explain why people preoccupied with delivering their countries from economic imperialism would be so unconcerned with the most aggressive imperialist power of our times, the Soviet Union. Mr. Chappell's lumpen-Marxism (Karl Wittfogel's term) is utterly inadequate to explain the complex political realities of Central America. Plato is a better guide.

HENRY D. FINDER oversimplifies to the point of caricature my argument concerning Somoza. Carter's policies could bring down Somoza because, like most regimes in the area, his lacked legitimacy and popular support. So, however, does its replacement—which in addition provides Soviet power a new base in the hemisphere. No one will ever know how much or what kind of aid would have been required to prevent the Sandinista victory. My own opinion is that our neutrality would have sufficed.

Mr. Finder is certainly correct that we cannot and should not go as far as the Cubans in an effort to manipulate global events. But surely we can defend our basic interests in large areas as close to us as Central America—not imposing regimes, but preventing their imposition by others.

Finally, Mr. Finder offers as justification for our policy the argument that we should join history: having seen that Somoza was likely to lose, we should have jumped quickly onto the winning side. The drive to be on the right side of history can justify any crime and rationalize any alliance. It is incompatible with moral behavior in life and in politics.

SURELY Carl Valenstein must have noticed that I spoke about the threat of being confronted by a ring of Soviet bases on the southern and eastern flanks. One swallow does not make a spring, nor one Cuba a ring—but as Castro remarked, there are now three of "them" in the hemisphere and they promised to become more numer-

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ous had Carter policies been continued.

I understand that Mr. Valenstein disagrees with Castro's characterization of the Nicaraguan regime. I have already given my reading of the evidence on the character of that government. I will add here only that if Nicaragua enters the Cuban/Soviet camp it will *not* be because of "rigidly anti-Communist" U.S. positions. Carter policymakers repeatedly indicated their willingness to settle for—indeed to encourage—"creative Marxism."

The national-security perspective is less morally limiting than Mr. Valenstein suggests. It is only necessary to accept that U.S. strength is intimately, inexorably linked to the freedom and independence of ourselves and others to understand that a policy oriented to U.S. national security will also be a policy that protects human rights.

I AM pleased that I was able to please Brady Tyson with the mention of him. However, I cannot give him full satisfaction. I did not characterize him as anti-American. His suggestion is only his way of fending off and trying to delegitimize criticism of the disastrous ideas and policies with which he has been associated.

I HAVE a sinking feeling that Kenneth H. W. Hilborn may be right. In fact, I even suggested as much in "Dictatorships & Double Standards." The parallels among these situations are suggestive, including our hapless efforts to hold Chiang Kai-shek responsible for creating his own democratic opposition.

FINALLY, I would like to thank Paul Hirsch, Ernest Lefever, and Benno Weiser Varon for their kind comments.

Nationalism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Elie Kedourie, in his otherwise admirable article, "A New International Disorder" [December 1980], argues that the precarious position of Africa's new rulers is in part due to the fact that "there is little or no relation between the formal Western-style institutions of government and the traditional African society of which these new rulers . . . suddenly find themselves in control." In the traditional society, Mr. Kedourie continues, "tribal loyalties and preferences ruled supreme," attitudes which naturally led to "corruption," which he characterizes as "the generally recognized hallmark of the new states." "But," he continues, "the idea of corruption is intelligible only where it is believed that government is and must be a government of laws, the public office is not a piece of property, and the public interest cannot be a respecter of persons. A society in which these notions have no hold is one in which the idea of corruption is unintelligible."

I have no argument with the contention that the "modern" institutions of African government often bear little relation to the traditional African society on which they (the modern institutions) are superimposed. Nor do I quarrel with the statement that in the traditional order, tribal (or more accurately, ethnic) loyalty reigns supreme. But such attitudes do not naturally lead to "corruption," nor do their contemporary analogues lead one to conclude that where they exist, "the idea of corruption is unintelligible."

What appears to be often forgotten or not recognized is the fact that the attraction of modern institutions—albeit Western-style, and often thoroughly flawed—lies not in their modernity, but in the fact that they respond in one critical aspect to a near-universal imperative of the traditional African order: that it be "constitutional." I do not refer here to a written constitution, but to the understood sense that the political order must be an order of structure, place, obligation, in which the rules according to which authority is exercised are the common heritage of the community. In this context, abuses of power—acts certainly analogous to most modern definitions of political corruption—were (and still are in many traditional contexts) punishable, for example, by removal from office, or worse. In Ghana, it was (and is) called "destoolment," and destooled chiefs suffered not only ignominy, but could in the past be killed if their affront to the office they held was heinous enough. In traditional Africa, the chief or king with unlimited, unchecked prerogatives was the exception, not the rule.

The corruption of many contemporary African regimes lies precisely in their inability to translate fully the "constitutional" legitimacy of the traditional order onto the modern national state. The polyarchal—i.e., democratic—assumptions of the early Western-style institutions were widely shared and popular because of their constitutional basis. When the new regimes, often run by self-seeking ideologues determined to build the new states on personalist foundations, began to abandon or pervert the traditional order, the paradoxical result was the emergence of the most virulent forms of parochial tribal politics, and with it, corruption. Unable to secure themselves, that is, legitimate their existence, many of the new regimes soon fell prey to tyrannies or successive coups. Let me add that Africans understood full well what was happening, and even the most corrupt recognized that their behavior would not have gone unpunished in the traditional order.

The notions of civic probity to which Mr. Kedourie refers are in fact widely held on both the modern and traditional African scene; the all-too common African tragedy is that the attractions—and corruptions—of absolute power recruit more rulers and regimes than the very African traditional notions of democracy and constitutional rule.

VICTOR T. LE VINE
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Elie Kedourie fears and dislikes nationalism. Not U.S., British, or the traditional European variety, but the virulent strain which has descended upon us since the end of World War II.

Mr. Kedourie would have us believe that world politics prior to 1914 was preferable to that strain with which we are now burdened. He waxes almost nostalgic about the balance of power, a concept which, in reality, often led men into armed conflict. Further, he sees the Rights of Man, similar in many ways to the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, as subversive of stability and of peace.

Unfortunately, Mr. Kedourie is afflicted with what I would call a selective memory. In fact, world politics prior to 1914 was a confusing tangle of intrigue and inbreeding. By the time of Queen Victoria's regime, almost all the royal families of Europe were related, thus accounting for cases of hemo-

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philia in many of the royal households. As for the balance of power, this was a concept whose express purpose was to preserve the sovereignty and independence of the states of Europe. That it was made to work there is no doubt; its practice, however, was marked by numerous abuses.

As an early example, we might point to the partitions of Poland. Poland, a weak but ancient kingdom, was dismembered under the guise of balance of power. Edmund Burke, a man of conservative bent, cried out against this, for in the first partition in 1772 he saw the crumbling of the old order. Poland thus disappeared by cold diplomatic calculation. This would be a foreshadowing; established rights were no longer safe even in peacetime.

On the whole, the balance of power remains a concept of the status quo. It would, when possible, deny nationalistic yearnings. Thus Metternich, a consummate practitioner of balance-of-power policy, spoke of Italy as merely "a geographical expression."

Mr. Kedourie has neatly avoided this problem. Nowhere in his article does he complain of the 19th-century appearance of European nation-states. There is no flogging of European nationalism. Instead, he bemoans the demise of the balance of power, and he describes 20th-century nationalism, accompanied by Bolshevism, as a principle of disorder.

By 1945, at the end of World War II, our planet had been turned upside down in a battle for freedom. Peoples who had lived under the yoke of colonialism believed that, at last, they would be granted the opportunity to reap the benefits of victory. The Atlantic Charter had clearly stated that all peoples should be allowed to determine their own political future.

Mr. Kedourie objects that the Atlantic Charter was filled with toothless pieties; that it did nothing to stop the possible advances of the Soviet Union. He complains that a Ho Chi Minh could have been portrayed as the George Washington of his country.

What he fails to see is that in Vietnam there was a long history of nationalist movement prior to World War II. The French had brutally suppressed it, and had continued to milk the country for their own gain. French colonials had ruled Vietnam for almost a century, during which time the lot of the natives had improved but little. Ho, a nationalist first, but undone in the eyes of the West because of his Communist background, was not allowed a chance to become his country's George Washington. Sadly, the U.S. chose to help the French in their futile effort to regain a foothold in their colony. Perhaps if the tenets of the Atlantic Charter had been followed more closely, the results might not have been so disastrous.

Nationalism since 1945 has become the world's most potent political force. This does not mean, as Mr. Kedourie would have us believe, that it must give birth to political disorder. Decolonization, which he rightly deplores for its slipshod implementation, might have been achieved more easily if the West had not displayed an initial reluctance to relinquish its hold over its colonies. Far more serious, though, the West failed to prepare its colonies adequately for independence. We displayed a needless negligence in dealing with our colonies. When we found that we could not retain them by force, we chose to let them drop away like so much excess baggage. The French in Indochina and in Algeria proved to be the worst offenders.

To make matters worse, the West often failed to distinguish between nationalism and Communism. John Foster Dulles's one-man crusade compounded this problem and served only to polarize world politics. Nasser of Egypt was certainly no Communist, but he was driven to seek aid from the Communist bloc by the actions of the West.

The problems facing us today because of our earlier errors are great. The world has become exceedingly dangerous, but this does not mean that we should abandon all hope. If the world is disordered, it is not because we do not operate by an anachronistic theory of international relations. Rather, it is because the West, particularly the U.S., victorious as it was at the end of World War II, failed to take up its responsibilities of leadership.

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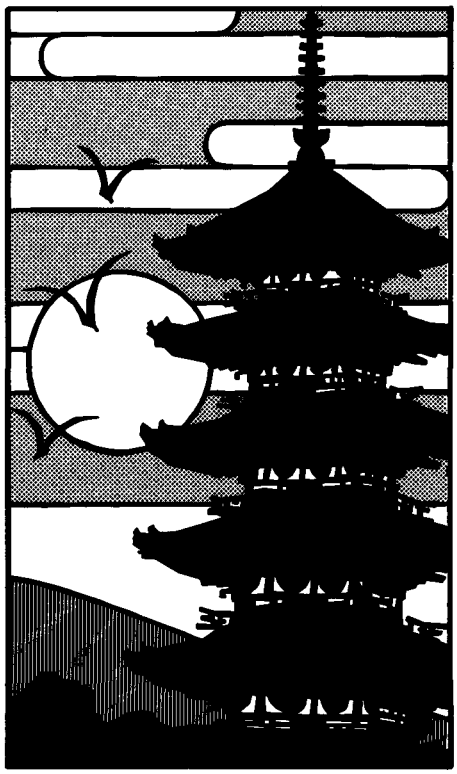

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When the war ended, we were in too much of a hurry to pack up our soldiers and send them home. We failed also to perceive the immense changes that had been wrought by worldwide upheaval. . . .

PAUL A. KELLOGG
New York City

ELIE KEDOURIE writes:

I do not disagree at all with Victor T. Le Vine's contention that the traditional African polity was generally "constitutional." But this traditional polity did not go beyond the tribe or the ethnic group. Modern political arrangements as bestowed on Africa by the former colonial powers aim precisely to transcend the tribe and the ethnic group, and aim to do so through the device of one man, one vote. African society has not, however, transcended tribal or ethnic loyalties. If these loyalties reign supreme, then the state, made despotic through the fearful power of universal suffrage, becomes simply an instrument for advancing the interests of one tribe or group to the detriment of others. In the logic of the modern European territorial state, this is corruption; in the logic of tribalism, it is not. This was the point of the remark in my article that in post-colonial Africa there is a ruinous tension between the form and the content of politics. Africans are human beings like the rest of us, and will feel injustice and misgovernment as keenly as the rest of us do. I hope my article did not imply the contrary. I was concerned simply to describe the cruel predicament in which Africans have been placed by their former rulers and their present masters.

To the best of my knowledge, Paul A. Kellogg is not personally acquainted with me. I do not, therefore, know how he can make such confident assertions about my fears and dislikes or the quality of my memory—subjects with which my article did not deal. If he had attended to the article, or if he had been at all acquainted with my writings on nationalism—which have been in the public domain these last twenty years—he would have known that in my view nationalism is a European invention which Asia and Africa have adopted, along with so many other European ideas and artifacts, and that I consider the consequences of nationalism to be similar in Europe and the rest of the world.

Regarding the balance of power, I did not say that it infallibly prevented conflict—who or what can?—but that it was a device which limited conflict. And why is it wrong for states to try to preserve their sovereignty and independence? I also do not see how the balance of power "remains a concept of the status quo." It is, on the contrary, a concept which assumes change and suggests ways of coping with it. Mr. Kellogg brings forward Poland as an example of the abuse of the balance of power. Why? Pre-Congress Poland was, in Lord Salisbury's words, "a ceremonious anarchy." Polish politics of the time were such as positively to invite intervention by Poland's more powerful neighbors, whose interests were touched by the external consequences of internal conflicts. Mr. Kellogg should also consider whether the fate of Poland since 1918 is an improvement on its condition under Austrian, Russian, and Czarist rule.

Mr. Kellogg writes of Ho Chi Minh with remarkable coyness: "a nationalist first, but undone in the eyes of the West because of his Communist background." "Communist background" is a nice way to describe the record of someone who, as the whole world knows, was a determined and skilled Comintern agent throughout his life, and who never ceased to work for the triumph of Communism. For the rest, Mr. Kellogg's vision of history after 1945 is blissfully simple: if only the West had done what Ho Chi Minh, Nasser—and perhaps Mao, the well-known agrarian reformer as well?—had bidden it to do, all would have been well. If it comforts him to believe this, let him by all means do so. But this empty sentimentality provides as firm a grip on reality as a dish of jello.

Socrates

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Any friend of Socrates is a friend of mine. Hence I trust that Irving Younger ["Socrates and Us," December 1980] will accept two comradely-tendered corrections to his excellent article prescribing remedies for cooling the fevered enactment of laws in our nation.

Early on, Mr. Younger notes that in 404 B.C.E., "the oligarchic party, led by Critias and Alcibiades, won power in Athens. Socrates was on their side." My understanding of this period is altogether different.

Alcibiades, who had not been in Athens for several years, was assassinated in 404 B.C.E. in a backwater Persian province on the orders of Lysander, Sparta's fleet commander. In this Lysander was acting on information from Critias, the leaders of Athens' Sparta-supported oligarchic party, that his Quisling government could not be considered secure while Alcibiades was still alive. "They feared that he might yet return to Athens, and with the mob to whom his name was magic, set himself up as head of a democracy" (E.L. Benson, *The Life of Alcibiades*).

Nor was Socrates on the side of the oligarchy, as Mr. Younger alleges. True, Socrates had not quit Athens and settled for the duration in nearby Piraeus like some of the more zealous democrats. Urban gadfly that he was, Socrates was content to remain in familiar surroundings, having no reason to spare Critias and his bloody gang (known as "The Thirty") from the trenchant censure heretofore reserved for the low breed of democrats that had succeeded noble, austere Pericles. Like Mr. Younger, Socrates was well aware that all governments, democratic or otherwise, unless constitutionally restrained, became despotisms.

Therefore, by no stretch can Socrates be described as the oligarchy's man. My leading authority is A. E. Taylor's *Socrates*. Taylor's own authorities are Plato (*Apology*, 32c-d) and Xenophon (*Memorabilia*, I ii 32-38):

> They [The Thirty] took occasion of his [Socrates'] caustic comments on their first irregular executions to cite him before themselves and forbid him to converse with younger men, on the pretext that he was contravening one of their decrees which prohibited the teaching of the art of speaking. Socrates countered with some characteristically humorous remarks about the impossibility of obeying such an injunction, and was dismissed with a menace by Critias. It was a more serious act of intimidation that the attempt was next made to implicate Socrates himself in one of these administrative murders. He, with four others, received express orders to arrest Leon of Salamis, a wealthy man whose property it was intended to confiscate. The others performed the task, and Leon was duly murdered, but Socrates went

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straight home, though he expected to pay for the disobedience with his life, but for the counterrevolution which ended the Terror.

I am not claiming that Socrates was a paragon of virtue. We have his wife Xantippe's and the dramatist Aristophanes' contrary testimony in that regard. But Mr. Younger, obviously a fond admirer of Socrates and an able lawyer, is not using his best evidence when he puts Socrates on the side of the Athenian oligarchy to which he never belonged.

AARON GOLDMAN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . .Those who have not read Plato's *Apology* and *Crito* swallow whole the myth that Socrates was the innocent victim of the unbridled passions of an Athenian jury. That Irving Younger has read the sources and still swallows the myth is remarkable. Surely he had cause to wonder why the vote for Socrates' conviction was so narrow (260-221) but the vote for the death penalty so wide (360-141). Why would anyone who voted Socrates innocent almost immediately thereafter vote to put him to death? . . .

Athenian law required that, after conviction, the prosecutor and the accused propose appropriate penalties. The jury was bound to accept one of the two proposals. It had no latitude to move toward a middle ground. In this case, the prosecution proposed the death penalty. Socrates' counter-proposal was that the city should provide him with a pension. This arrogant disrespect for what Athenians considered due process was what made the Athenians furious. They had voted for conviction in the belief that Socrates would propose a minimum fine, that he would then be freed, and would possibly be a bit more restrained in his future nagging. They had been less angered at him than irritated. Most of those who voted for his conviction believed him guilty of a misdemeanor rather than a capital crime.

It was his infuriating self-righteousness and contempt for their decision that angered them. But even those who remained calm faced a dilemma. Should Socrates become the first recipient of a public-welfare system? As the new issue of punishment arose, it is likely that there were massive shifts in sentiment. Some who voted for conviction were appalled at the prospect of putting the old man to death. More, who voted for acquittal, felt the choice offered them was no choice.

Socrates knew precisely what he was doing, and could predict the likely consequences of his action. Was he, in Mr. Younger's words, giving a rational answer to a traditional question, or was he exhibiting the nasty trait of believing in the infallibility of his own reason —completely disregarding the rights and sensibilities of his fellow citizens?

What is most striking is Socrates' hypocrisy. While demonstrating his contempt for Athenian institutions and the Athenian people, he kept protesting his love and respect for them. Given a chance to escape, he rejected it on the ground there was no place on earth that would be hospitable to him.

The regrettable consequence of Socrates' intransigence has been the bias it has engendered against democracy. Plato, soured by the event, left no room for popular opinion in his *Republic*—which is as close a picture of a totalitarian state as can be drawn. And the influence of Plato has soured generations of scholars against the democratic ideal. One is reminded of the millions of victims of totalitarian regimes who went to their deaths without the luxury of a Socratic trial.

Mr. Younger has done us a service by thinking clearly about the consequences of our being engulfed by mountains of silly legislation. He does us no service by misinterpreting the Socrates story to imply we need less democracy.

BERNARD SHRIBER
Sharon, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The disturbing thing about Irving Younger's "Socrates and Us" is that at times he doesn't make it absolutely clear that he's joking.

Surely no one could be serious in suggesting, for example, that the Constitution allows the courts to invalidate an act of Congress because some of the members voting

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on the bill did not read it. In addition to betraying a rather charming ignorance about Congress and its members, such a suggestion would amount to a contention that the time for democratic government under the Constitution has passed and the time for despotic government has arrived. For Mr. Younger's claim is that the courts should impose a series of rules to govern not only the content of legislation, but also the "method and style" by which laws are enacted. Such rules are called for, Mr. Younger contends, because legislatures are led by popular pressure to do stupid things. The courts must stop the stupidity. Of course to take away the political branches' power to enact stupid laws (stupid in the opinion of judges) would be to take away the power of those branches and of the people who elect their officers to decide what is good public policy. It would be to make government accountable to the judges and not to the people.

Mr. Younger seems to be warning his readers that this kind of despotism by courts might come to pass if the people don't do their ruling more conscientiously. He is reminding us, surely, that the great problem with government by the majority of the people but of and for all the people lies in making that majority act responsibly. Mr. Younger could not intend that his proposal of sweeping new powers for the courts be taken seriously and conclude, as he does in his final paragraph, that there is still hope for American democracy. Only a person who did not understand what constitutional democracy is or a person who was convinced that it could not work could seriously argue for that proposal.

ROBERT WEBKING
University of Texas
El Paso, Texas

IRVING YOUNGER writes:

Pretending to no more Greek history than an English major might pick up at Harvard in the 1950's, I yield the field to Aaron Goldman. My purpose in the first few paragraphs of "Socrates and Us" was briefly to set the scene for the quoted passages from Plato's *Apology*. I went to the Oxford Classical Dictionary (2d ed. 1970, "Socrates") and to Hugh Tredennick's introduction to *The Last Days of Socrates* (Penguin, 1959) and helped myself to what I found. If those authorities have it wrong, so much the worse for them. I'll know better next time. The point I was trying to make, of course, has nothing to do with how it came about that Socrates was put on trial.

Bernard Shriber's view of the significance of Socrates' career is eccentric but, since he seems convinced, hard to argue against. I commend to him Francis M. Cornford's 1932 lectures, *Before and After Socrates*. Why, Cornford asks, does "the life and work of Socrates stand out as marking the central crisis or turning-point" in the history of Greek thought? His answer:

> The Socratic philosophy dismisses this conformity [to current ideals of conduct] under the name of "popular virtue." Plato puts the virtue of "the respectable citizen" on the same level with the unremitting pursuit of duty characteristic of bees, ants, and other social insects. This is not what Socrates meant by "goodness." The whole content of his mission was to supersede the childish morality of blameless conformity by an ideal of spiritual manhood rising above the commonly acknowledged bounds of human capacity. This was to substitute for a morality of attainable virtue, such as the world respects and rewards, a morality aspiring to a perfection unattainable save by a few men whom the world has rejected while they lived, and only learned too late to worship as heroic or divine. Such a man was Socrates.

I suggest that Plato intended his *Republic* to be a kind of fantastical vision of the ideal state in a different and better world. For Plato's account of good government in this world, one turns to the *Laws*.

To Robert Webking I offer assurances that my essay was not a joke and apologies for failing to prevent him from missing the point. The proposals I advanced would hardly result in vesting despotic power in the courts, for they would empower the courts affirmatively to decree nothing. At most they would empower the courts to nullify an enactment of the legislature, certainly not on the ground of "stupidity" (actually, the courts probably already have that power: lawyers call it "substantive due process") but on the basis that the legislature has not here *enacted* (my first rule) a *statute* (my second, third, and fourth rules).

The Puerto Ricans

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* [Books in Review, January], Thomas Sowell displays a strange sense of proportion. The *Encyclopedia* contains 135 entries written by 125 authors, but 25 percent of his review is devoted to the criticism of my one entry on the Puerto Ricans. My entry consists of eighteen columns; his criticism is centered on four sentences. If the readers of COMMENTARY were expecting an adequate review of the *Encyclopedia*, they have been treated to a very unbalanced assessment.

The article, he complains, is an exercise in "advocacy" rather than professional scholarship; or, as he puts it in his own professional and scholarly style, "the smuggling of one man's opaque conclusions into a factual discussion"; a manifestation of "the self-indulgence of Father Fitzpatrick." One of his problems is my statement that Puerto Ricans manifest a strong interest in bilingual education as a corrective to the learning problems of their children. If the readers of the year 2025 wish to have an accurate, scholarly description of the Puerto Ricans of 1980, they will be sadly misinformed if they do not understand the relationship of bilingualism to the Puerto Rican community as presented in the *Encyclopedia* article. It is the daily outcry of the Puerto Rican community, not a policy statement of Father Fitzpatrick, that access to upward mobility is blocked because of failures in the educational system; and the most important government report in twenty-five years about the Puerto Rican experience provides abundant documentation that much of this is the result of discrimination. According to Mr. Sowell this is not material suitable for an encyclopedia article which seeks to describe the factual realities of Puerto Rican life in 1980. If the readers of the next century wish to know why there were many more Puerto Ricans in the City University in 1980 than in 1970, Mr. Sowell claims it would be unscholarly for an encyclopedia article to inform them that the key factor in the change was the open-admissions policy of the 1970's. What he calls an opaque conclusion of mine is, rather, a factual and thoroughly substantiated explanation of one of

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the major events in the educational experience of Puerto Ricans.

Mr. Sowell says he is waiting for the second edition of the *Encyclopedia*, presumably to correct the inadequacies of the first. What is really needed is a second edition of his review to correct the inadequacies of the first.

JOSEPH P. FITZPATRICK, S.J.
Fordham University
Bronx, New York

THOMAS SOWELL writes:

I think my review was clear enough, and the readers of COMMENTARY intelligent enough, that it is unnecessary to reply to Father Fitzpatrick's obfuscation.

Teaching Ethics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

William J. Bennett's "Getting Ethics" [December 1980] addresses with clarity and good humor the foibles of today's "ethicists." . . . To see why courses in ethics are not likely to contribute to morality . . . requires looking no further than the word "ethics" itself, which derives from a Greek word that pointed to the totality of a people's judgments, its way of life, its rights and wrongs. Something of its significance is retained in our word "ethos." As such, an ethic was not arrived at through science, but through tradition and convention. Honoring the courageous or respecting one's parents, for example, were matters of understanding, or perhaps of "moral indoctrination"—but surely not matters for reflection.

Those for whom reflection upon right and wrong in the fullest sense *was* a matter of concern—philosophers—knew the limits of their enterprise. Philosophers have always been aware of the distinct limits of knowledge of what is good, and known as well that abstract speculations do not descend from on high to inform other practical decisions of everyday life. Philosophers, in other words, have been content to allow convention its role in human life, realizing that it cannot in any event be abolished.

In the modern world, morality has become a matter of science, and ethics the study of universally accessible rights and wrongs. Being unable to find substantive codes of behavior that meet their abstract ideals, however, ethicists fall back

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of necessity upon the sheerest formalism. It is not surprising that ethicists end up teaching little more than "values clarification." The more drained of substance morality becomes, the more dogmatically do ethicists promote the formalism of moral relativism. "Sheer emptiness," as Mr. Bennett so well calls it, is thus served up in the guise of a highly significant enterprise. . . .

JEFFREY T. BERGNER
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I think that it is true to say that philosophical ethics is primarily normative and analytic, that is, it attempts to formulate and defend the fundamental principles of morally right action, to explain the meanings of the crucial terms of moral appraisal such as "good," "bad," "right," "wrong," and to examine the way in which judgments of appraisal are justified. But I am not confident that, properly understood, it is either opposed to "the traditional ways of carrying on the enterprise of moral education," viz., exhortation or indoctrination, or that it spells ethical relativism, as William J. Bennett argues.

The advocates of analysis do not and need not deny that ethics, like politics, is a practical science whose aim is action; and most subscribe to the dictum of Aristotle, a supreme moral analyst, that ethics does not merely represent an effort "to know what virtue is, but to become good, else there would be no advantage in studying it." . . .

During the past decade the techniques of ethical analysis have been brought to bear on a host of moral problems such as abortion, euthanasia, preferential hiring, sexual morality, capital punishment, violence, etc. And . . . the results have often been embodied in the legislative enactments and judicial decisions which habitually influence social policy. . . .

To . . . the claim that contemporary analysis presupposes ethical relativism, it should be pointed out that while the readiness to examine differing normative principles and theories may seem to *suggest* that relativism is *true*, i.e., that no one principle is intrinsically more correct than any other, this is surely not *implied* by analysis: one may concede the variety of conflicting principles without renouncing the expectation that one may prove correct or more acceptable. Indeed, analysis, it may be said, is designed to establish the acceptability of one normative theory over another; nor is any teacher of ethics required to deny that possibility or refrain from the attempt to demonstrate it. . . .

Two final comments. The student questioning which Mr. Bennett regards as already routine, is hardly the kind of questioning prescribed by the ethical philosophy of the sort I have outlined above. And rather than promoting cynicism, a demonstration of the requirements of moral agency may, on the contrary, serve to replace nihilistic attitudes with the notion of moral responsibility. Second, appeal to established principle or to traditional values on which, it is hoped, we can base our "demands" on the student in order to arouse a decision is frequently useless for that purpose. For that tradition (our own?) which Mr. Bennett implicitly acclaims is itself composed of conflicting principles; the resolution, for example, of the problem of preferential hiring will involve the competing claims of equality and of compensatory justice, as well as utilitarian notions of the common good, and it will take all our skill to determine the precedence of principle in such cases. That task devolves on moral philosophy which, it is plain, is neither superfluous nor irrelevant.

ROBERT ROSTHAL
Department of Philosophy
University of North Carolina
Greensboro, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his brilliant article, William J. Bennett somewhat dampens my optimism about the latest approaches to ethics instruction. . . .

It had been my understanding that beyond providing a background in the ethics of Western civilization, the new values-clarification classes were conceived to crystallize ethical awareness during secondary educational years so as to awaken students earlier to their partnership in shaping personal attitudes and individual pursuits.

Through such rousing exercises, I imagined the possibility of generations of individuals becoming more aware of their rights to moral choices and creative initiatives as they emerged from the age of innocence. I envisioned students made alert to positive and negative values transmitted to them during formative years in family and cultural environments. The new texts promised to be an improvement over the scholasticism that dominated the teaching of ethics and logic when I was a student in the 1940's.

Perhaps I am less distressed with educators who fear "moral indoctrination," however, because I see a possibility that while trying so hard not to influence moral behavior, they may be impelled as well to abandon a dogmatic style of teaching. Rather than project a teacher-preacher stance, they may take on the educator-facilitator mandate that will encourage students to engage more freely in controversy and expose conflicts of conscience that may be interfering with their moral awareness.

Further, I entertain the possibility that, with mankind's ethical and moral heritage taken out of the realm of vague and theoretical concepts, students may be energized to put their own values to work in comprehending and dealing with the crises of their life and times.

MARTHA S. CHERKIS
New York City

WILLIAM J. BENNETT writes:

Jeffrey T. Bergner's welcome letter reminds me of the charge made by Alasdair MacIntyre that too many of the academy's present intellectual pursuits are "ghost disciplines." These disciplines speak to no one outside the guild and move no one whatsoever. When ethics is so pursued, we have reached the end point in the abdication of our responsiblity to the young.

Robert Rosthal's comments are in the main unobjectionable, but are beside the point of my article. Complex "analysis" is appropriate when and where it is called for. Philosophers enjoy it, but for students who wonder whether there is any firm meaning to terms like right and wrong, very difficult problems of applied ethics serve to reinforce moral relativism and leave them prey to ideology. First things first. So to both Robert Rosthal and Martha S. Cherkis I would point out that in teaching ethics, and indeed, in many other things today, we are well counseled by Justice Holmes's suggestion, made in another context, that we are more in need of study of the obvious than investigations of the obscure.

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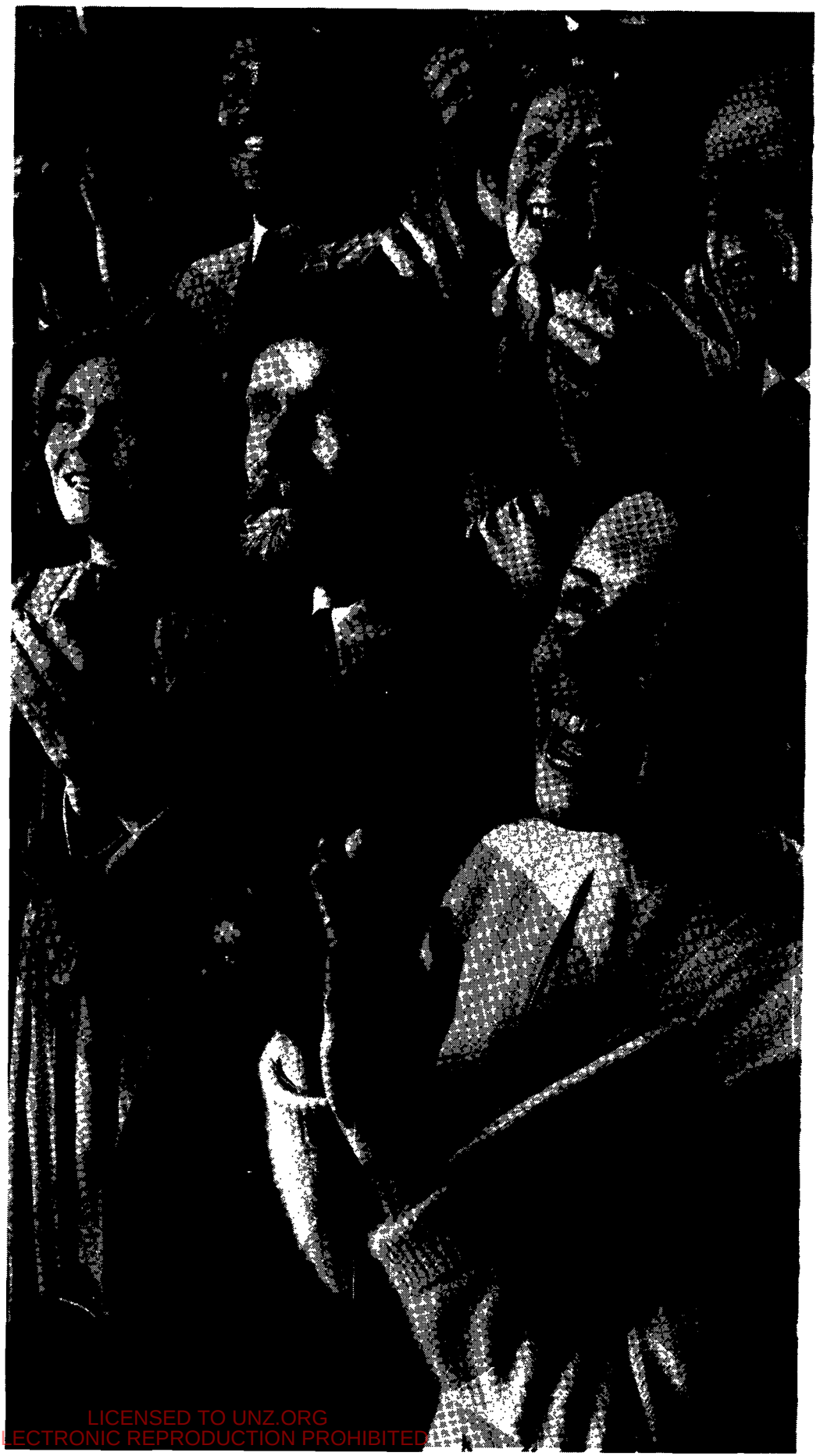

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The Future Danger

Norman Podhoretz

EVERYONE—or nearly everyone at any rate—now recognizes that a change of major proportions came over the United States after the seizure of the hostages in Iran in November 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which followed hard upon its heels. Yet putting the case in such precise temporal terms is slightly misleading. It suggests that the change in question occurred overnight and all at once, whereas what actually happened was the dramatic crystallization of a process which had been developing and gathering momentum for five years and possibly even more. Having thus matured, this great change went on to demand—and achieve—full political expression and representation. Within a year after the hostages were seized, Ronald Reagan, who embodied the new mood more fully than any other candidate for the Presidency in 1980, had first swept away all his Republican rivals with relative ease, and had then gone on to inflict a humiliating defeat on the sitting Democratic President.

Reagan's victory was all the more significant in that Jimmy Carter had in response to Iran and Afghanistan made his own adjustment to the new mood, and was much more closely attuned to it than Edward Kennedy, his chief rival within the Democratic party. But Carter's adjustments were too hasty, too little, and too late to overcome his identification with the now discredited attitudes of the recent past and the policies generated by those attitudes.

In winning the Presidency by a landslide, then, Ronald Reagan confirmed, and in unmistakable terms, that a new consensus had indeed come into being. Specifically his election demonstrated that two related arguments which had been raging in the United States for the past decade or so were now finally settled. The first concerned the growth of Soviet power, and the second had to do with the decline of American power.

I

IN RETROSPECT it seems strange that there should have been any argument at all, let alone a ferocious one, over the growth of Soviet power. After all, the basic facts were available and they were reasonably clear. It was no secret that in the course of the negotiations to resolve the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, one of the Soviet representatives, Vassily Kuznetsov, told a member of the American team, John J. McCloy, that the Soviet Union would never let such a thing happen to it again. In an "eyeball-to-eyeball" confrontation with the United States, the Soviets had been forced to back down by superior American power. Their naval power had been no match for ours, and the strategic nuclear balance looming behind the conventional match-up had been even more overwhelmingly favorable to the United States. In short, the Soviets knew that they would be beaten in a limited naval engagement, and that if such an engagement should escalate into a nuclear exchange, their country would suffer much greater damage than they could inflict upon us. It was this situation that, Kuznetsov vowed, the Soviets would never allow to arise again.

Nor was it any secret that the Soviets proved as good as Kuznetsov's word. They embarked on a military build-up so steady and of such impressive breadth and scope that concealment would have been impossible even if it had been the objective. In every category of military power, conventional and nuclear, strategic and tactical, on land, on the sea, and in the air, the Soviets moved relentlessly forward. Quantities were increased year by year while the quality and sophistication of these ever larger arsenals were simultaneously being improved and refined.

The facts, as I say, were known. There might be uncertainty or disagreement over the exact dimensions of the Soviet build-up. Inside the CIA, for example, analysts examining the data came up with a lower estimate of the sums the Soviets were spending on the military than a group of outside analysts ("Team B") looking at the same material. But there was no disagreement among the informed over the upward direction of the general trend.

Nevertheless, while not exactly denying the facts of the case, many people simply refused to pay any attention to them. This refusal was manifested in a tendency to discuss the American defense budget as though it were a purely domestic issue—how much money the "Pentagon" could get for itself as

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compared with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Rarely if ever in the debates over spending for defense from the late 60's through the mid-70's did anyone emphasize the major threat that American military power existed to defend against. One heard next to nothing in those years about the Soviet build-up in conventional forces and how it might affect our own military needs. Mainly what one heard about was the putatively bloated American military establishment whose size was evidently a function of self-aggrandizing machinations by the military-industrial complex and had no relation whatever to anything the Soviets were doing in the field of military force.

One did, to be sure, hear a good deal even in those years about Soviet advances in the *nuclear* area, especially in connection with the negotiations that eventually led to the signing of SALT I in 1972. Yet here too an effort was made to prevent the facts from speaking for themselves. Instead of simply being disregarded, as in the case of the build-up of Soviet conventional forces, the build-up in strategic nuclear forces was explained away.

As Richard Pipes* described the process: "The frenetic pace of the Soviet nuclear build-up was explained first on the ground that the Russians had a lot of catching up to do, then that they had to consider the Chinese threat, and finally on the grounds that they are inherently a very insecure people and should be allowed an edge in deterrent capability." The Soviets could not in this view be expected to engage in serious arms-control negotiations so long as they were in a position of inferiority. But the minute they "felt themselves equal to the United States in terms of effective deterrence, they would stop further deployment"—and they would then cooperate with us in setting a cap on the "arms race."

When, however, these expectations were disappointed by the refusal of the Soviet Union to remain content with parity after it had achieved it, the response was to dismiss its drive for superiority as meaningless. Henry Kissinger's "What in the name of God is strategic superiority . . . at these levels of numbers?" (a rhetorical question to which some years later he would give a different answer from the one implied here) was the most famous American expression of this attitude. But it was by no means the only one. Thus McGeorge Bundy, who had preceded Kissinger as a National Security Adviser, acknowledged in 1972 that the Soviet Union was engaged in "a very expensive" program of "strategic rearmament," but he characterized the entire effort as "essentially useless." It was, he added, "no more than another demonstration of the folly that seems to be a frequent accompaniment of essentially sober national policies."

Four years later, Paul Warnke, just appointed head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and chief American negotiator at the SALT II conference, spoke in similar terms of "the primitive aspects of Soviet nuclear doctrine" in accordance with which they were building an arsenal clearly designed to fight and win—rather than merely deter—a nuclear war. Instead of paying attention to such primitive ideas and policies, Warnke said, "we ought to be trying to educate them into the real world of strategic nuclear weapons. . . ."

THIS debate over the Soviet military build-up was pretty much confined to the experts, the lay public being effectively excluded by the repellent vocabulary in which the discussion was conducted and the esoteric statistics that served as counters in the argument. But there was also a political side to the debate having to do with Soviet intentions, and demanding no special technical expertise.

On this issue the people who believed that the Soviet Union was either not really interested in achieving strategic superiority, or that if it was, it was wasting its time and money in a primitive folly, tended to line up with the people who believed that the Soviets no longer had expansionist aims and that whenever they did expand it was because they suffered from insecurity and paranoia. As Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard confidently asserted (in an article which had the misfortune of being published just as the invasion of Afghanistan was being launched),† the Soviet Union had now become a "status-quo power." Yet before Afghanistan had come Angola and South Yemen—both taken over with the direct participation of Soviet military surrogates—while Laos, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Cambodia were being pulled into the Soviet orbit with the help of massive Soviet military aid. Thus the refusal to face the facts of growing Soviet military power was matched by a commensurate refusal to face the escalation of imperial adventurism that was its predictable accompaniment.

It is an exaggeration to say, as Robert G. Kaiser** does, that "the argument that the Soviets were not really aggressive . . . simply disappeared" after the invasion of Afghanistan. For not even that cataclysmic event could change the minds of certain political commentators about Soviet intentions. Intransigent proponents of the theory that Soviet actions, including the invasion of Afghanistan itself, stemmed entirely from defensiveness ranged in intellectual weight from George F. Kennan to Ronald Steel, and they had their counterparts in politicians like Senator Kennedy and Senator McGovern.

Still, as the weeks and months wore on, the posi-

* "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight & Win a Nuclear War," COMMENTARY, July 1977.

† "Muscle and Brains," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1979/80.

** "U.S.-Soviet Relations: Goodbye to Détente," *Foreign Affairs*, Special Issue (Vol. 59, No. 3).

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tion of these intransigents did suffer a greater and greater seepage of influence. Suddenly somber stories about the Soviet military build-up were appearing in sectors of the media which only yesterday had been notable for ignoring or downplaying or even decrying as hysterical and alarmist the Churchillian warnings of groups like the Committee on the Present Danger and individuals like Senator Henry M. Jackson and Governor Ronald Reagan: *Time*, *Newsweek*, the New York *Times*, the commercial television networks, and even, on an amazing occasion or two, public television.

Suddenly too it became respectable to talk and worry about the uses to which this increase in military power was being put in the present, and the future strategic designs it might also be relied upon to serve. In the recent past the tendency had been to poke fun at anyone who so much as suggested that the Soviet Union even had a strategic design. Such a suggestion was likely to be caricatured as a belief in the existence of a detailed blueprint and a specific timetable for world domination and accordingly as too primitive to merit the consideration of a sophisticated mind. Now, however, respectful attention began to be paid to the view that the Soviet Union, far from being a status-quo power, had moved into a dynamically expansionist or imperialistic phase. In this reading, the pattern of Soviet international activities pointed toward a strategy aimed at encircling the Middle East, gaining control of its oil fields, or at least of access to them, and thereby making possible the "Finlandization" of Western Europe, Japan, and ultimately even the United States.

It was not that this interpretation achieved universal acceptance; far from it. But certainly the Churchillian view, at least in its broad outlines—that a Soviet military build-up had been taking place and that this build-up signified aggressive intent—was now in the ascendant in the world of ideas.

SO FAR as public opinion in the wider sense was concerned, however, it would be a gross understatement to say that the Churchillian view was merely in the ascendant there; the more precise word would be triumphant. The pollsters Daniel Yankelovich and Larry Kaagan* have summarized the evidence as follows:

> For the public, . . . the invasion [of Afghanistan] confirmed fears that had been growing for years, fears that the Soviets were taking ever more advantage of American weakness to strengthen their position in the Middle East. Surveys taken in the aftermath of the invasion showed 50 percent of the American people concluding that the "Russians feel they now have military superiority over the United States and can get away" with such a move. And a 78 percent majority maintained that, unthwarted by American strength, the Soviets were motivated by an opportunity to gain "more influence over the oil-producing countries of the Middle East."

It would probably be unfair to read President Carter's response to Afghanistan as nothing more than an election-year deference to this shift in popular sentiment. When Carter said that the invasion had "made a more dramatic change in my own opinion of what the Soviets' ultimate goals are than anything they've done in the previous time I've been in office," he was admitting that he had accepted the view of Soviet intentions which had been standard among the academic experts and the foreign-policy establishment, but that he could no longer do so in the face of so blatant a living refutation of the assumptions behind that view.

Kennedy, on the other hand, held onto the conventional wisdom of the pre-Afghanistan period. He called the invasion a merely "regional crisis" and associated himself with the position—argued by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., among others—that it was an index of Soviet weakness rather than of Soviet power. This was not the least important cause of Kennedy's failure to take the Democratic nomination away from Carter who, whatever else might be troubling his candidacy, was at least more closely attuned to what the voters were feeling and thinking on this highly critical issue.†

But Reagan of course was even more closely in touch with public sentiment than Carter—much more. Reagan had long been expressing anxiety over the Soviet military build-up, and he did not need the evidence of Afghanistan to persuade him that Soviet expansionism was posing a mortal threat to the United States and the West in general.

In warning that we would not tolerate a Soviet effort to seize control of the oil fields of the Persian Gulf, Carter undoubtedly had public opinion behind him. But by now public opinion had already moved beyond the Carter Doctrine and was ready to support an even bolder statement of the Soviet threat: and this was not the least important cause of Reagan's overwhelming victory. He was elected on a platform that emphasized "the present danger"; soon after becoming President he spoke of "world revolution" as the Soviet goal; and he appointed a Secretary of State, Alexander M. Haig, who talked about "the transformation of Soviet military power from a continental and largely land army to a global offensive army, navy, and air force, fully capable of supporting an imperial foreign policy."

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* "Assertive America," *Foreign Affairs*, Special Issue (Vol. 59, No. 3).

†Although we keep hearing that the economy was the main or even the only issue in the 1980 election, Yankelovich and Kaagan report that at the beginning of 1980 a 42 percent plurality of Americans named foreign policy as "the most important problem facing the country today—ahead of the economy and substantially ahead of energy concerns."

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The distance between all this and the statement of Haig's predecessor, Cyrus R. Vance, that the Soviet leaders had "similar dreams and aspirations" to those of our own for stability and peace is a measure of how far the new consensus on the issue of Soviet power had traveled from the old.

II

THE second major element of the new consensus is the obverse of the first. That is, as Soviet power is now generally recognized to have been rising, so American power is now seen to have been declining; and as the increase in Soviet power is now understood to represent an index of aggressive designs directly threatening to us, so the decline of American power is acknowledged to have brought consequences already bordering on the intolerable, with the almost certain prospect of worse to come unless drastic steps are taken without any further delay.

The distance traveled here from the conventional wisdom of the recent past is perhaps even greater than in the case of Soviet power. Even in the early 70's, at the height of American euphoria over détente, there were skeptics with solid credentials who expressed non-dismissible doubts about the putative transformation of the Soviet Union into a status-quo power. While, for example, the chairman of Pepsi Cola and other luminaries of American business with more strategically important goods to sell were rushing to Moscow laden with the "rope" that Lenin famously predicted the capitalists would provide for their own execution at the hands of Soviet hangmen, the AFL-CIO under George Meany and Lane Kirkland was thinking, and voicing, other thoughts. Nor did most Americans surrender their suspicions about Soviet intentions as readily as their leaders and supposed betters in the State Department, the White House, and the foreign-policy establishment.

So far as the issue of *American* power went, however, there was much less dissent in any quarter from the idea that the problem was not too little but too much. Almost everyone in those final years of the Vietnam war and their immediate aftermath seemed to agree that the defense budget was "bloated." The only real argument was over the amount that could or should be cut.

Thus at a time when the defense budget was running to about $75 billion, proposed cuts ranged from $10 to $30 billion; and there was hardly a weapon in the American arsenal that was spared the hostile scrutiny of one or another critic of the "Pentagon" (the spreading use of this vaguely sinister term to describe our own military establishment was itself a significant symptom of the general mood).

In 1972, the New York *Times*, declaring that "America's defense budget is exploding, becoming itself a threat to the security and well-being of the nation," called for "deep cutbacks" in both nuclear and conventional forces. Public opinion soon began diverging from this attitude, but in the early 70's at least, there was no gap at all: only 11 percent of the American people then favored increases in the defense budget. So powerful was the anti-defense tide that even Senator Henry M. Jackson, regarded in those days as an unreconstructed cold warrior and the very model of a hawk, had to make some accommodation to it: he favored small defense cuts and "a prudent defense posture."

By 1975, in what came to be called the Great Debate over post-Vietnam foreign policy, one Senator after another, sounding like Goneril and Regan asking King Lear why he needed so many knights in his entourage ("What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five?" "What need one?") rose to the floor to rail against "the degree to which it [America's destructive force] goes beyond what we really need" (Patrick Leahy), against our "fanatical desire to be always No. 1 in the ability to kill people in war" (Mark Hatfield), against "a defense structure that is artificially high, redundant, or unnecessarily provocative" (John Culver). No wonder, then, that Jimmy Carter was able to win the Presidency in 1976 on a platform calling for cuts in defense spending on the order of $5-7 billion.

This readiness, nay eagerness, to cut back on American military power was encouraged by several ideas that gained widespread acceptance in the same period. The most influential of these was the doctrine of mutual assured destruction (MAD). According to the MAD theory, it was both unnecessary and undesirable to build a strategic nuclear force capable of more than a devastating retaliatory strike against the major Soviet population centers: anything beyond this (including defensive systems like the ABM) was "overkill" or provocative, or both. Since, as Senator John Glenn put it in opposing the B-1 bomber in 1975, "we are already so far above anything we need with respect to ICBM's, ... to talk about needing another weapon to deliver nuclear weapons is . . . wishful thinking of the highest order." Senator John Culver, basing himself on the same reasoning, went even further in declaring that "we have obscene overkill capacity that is totally unconscionable and unjustifiable."

This particular line of argument was restricted to strategic nuclear weapons. But there was a kindred approach to conventional forces which became almost equally influential. Again sounding like Goneril and Regan, critics asked why the army needed so many men, why the navy needed so many ships, why the air force needed so many fighter planes. The very existence of such swollen arsenals and capabilities constituted a standing temptation to put them to use. Would we have

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gone into Vietnam, for example, if we had not been itching to test our new anti-guerrilla forces and our advanced technologies of destruction?

And if one great "lesson" of Vietnam was that what used to be called standing armies led inexorably to ill-advised wars, another was that under contemporary conditions military power was no longer the decisive factor—not in political conflict and not even in war itself. For had not our conventional forces, powerful beyond the dreams of traditional military planners though they were, still proved insufficient to win the day? And in any case, what good did military power do in an interdependent world in which the great issues were economic rather than political? After all, had not the militarily powerless oil-producing nations successfully imposed their will on the infinitely more powerful nations of the West, including the United States?

THREE major events came together after 1976 to damage and even discredit these arguments and the policies they simultaneously sired and justified. The first was the signing of the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. Much to the surprise of the opponents of SALT II, the debate over the treaty turned into a means of persuading a great many people, including many Senators who supported ratification, that there were serious deficiencies in our strategic posture, that we were falling behind, and that—as the then dovish Foreign Relations Committee put it in reporting the treaty favorably—"additional defense efforts by the United States will be necessary to preserve deterrence and essential equivalence in the 1980's and beyond."

In other words, the problem was not too much American power, as the consensus of 1975 had it, but too little. Accordingly, the Gonerils and Regans of 1975 now reappeared, as one might say, in the guise of Cordelia, declaring that "we must improve our defense capabilities" (Gary Hart), that "we have been woefully remiss in allowing our military preparedness to erode to its present unhappy state" (John Glenn), that "it is remarkable how much consensus there is ... as to what we really have to do to strengthen our military capabilities" (John Culver). Only a few short years before, the debate had been over how much to cut from the defense budget. Now everyone agreed that defense spending had to be increased by a minimum of 3 percent in real terms, and the debate was over how much to add over and above that figure.*

The second great milestone on this particular journey was the seizure of the hostages in Iran. To the questions once posed by the Gonerils and Regans of the defense debate, our impotence in the face of this blatant act of aggression provided what seemed to most Americans an irrefutable answer. Surely we ought to have been able to respond through covert action or with a successful rescue mission. But the CIA had for all practical purposes been robbed of the capacity to engage in covert action, and the fiasco of the rescue mission provided the sorriest demonstration imaginable of how poorly maintained our military equipment was and to what a low estate in preparedness and skill our forces had finally sunk.

This experience of impotence was deepened by the third great event in the emergence of the new consensus: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In addition to discrediting the idea of the Soviet Union as a status-quo power, the invasion simultaneously made vast numbers of people aware that we had nothing with which to answer a possible Soviet drive on the oilfields of the Persian Gulf—a drive, that is, against the life-line of our civilization—but the threat of full-scale nuclear war. We had no bases, we had no rapid-deployment force, and the only way we could strengthen our military presence in the region was by stretching our naval power thin.

The same change which had become so strikingly evident in the Senate during the SALT II debate was now making itself felt in the media as well. Just as stories about the Soviet build-up were appearing in places where little or no attention had been paid to it before, so reports on the deplorable state of American military power began showing up in many of the same papers and on many of the same programs. Perhaps the most telling example was a series of prominently featured articles that ran day after day for a full week in the New York *Times* documenting in great and painful detail the deteriorating condition of our military defenses from every point of view.

But dwarfing even these great signs of change was the seismic upheaval in American public opinion. Between 1971 and 1979 (before the taking of the hostages) the proportion favoring more spending on defense rose steadily from 11 percent to 42 percent. "Since that time," Yankelovich and Kaagan write, "growing majorities have endorsed higher defense spending, and the events in Afghanistan pushed support for an enlarged military budget up to 74 percent." As of June 1980, the only area of federal spending that fewer people wished to see cut than the defense budget was social security. After Afghanistan, moreover, a solid majority of Americans came to favor reinstatement of the draft, and after Iran an astonishing 79 percent came out for "overhauling and stepping up" the activities of the CIA.

If Ronald Reagan was a more credible representative of the new attitude toward Soviet power than Jimmy Carter, he was even more closely in

* For a fuller account of these particular developments, see Joshua Muravchik's "Turnabout in the Senate" (COMMENTARY, November 1980), on which I have been drawing here.

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tune with the new attitude toward American power. It hardly mattered that Carter (who had been elected on promises to cut the defense budget by at least $5 billion and never to lie to the American people) now boasted of having increased defense spending and committed himself to further increases in the years ahead, or that he instituted registration for the draft, or that he authorized the building and deployment of a rapid-deployment force and the MX missile. Nor, on the other side, did it matter that Reagan came out against a peacetime draft and talked skeptically about both the rapid-deployment force and the MX. Most people knew that Carter was wary of American power and inhibited almost to the point of paralysis in the use of it, just as everyone knew that Reagan believed in American power and could be trusted to rebuild it and to use it if the need should arise.

And so Reagan was elected on a platform promising to restore American military superiority (later modified by the exigencies of the campaign to "a margin of safety"). The early indications were, moreover, that he would work much harder to keep this promise than Carter did (or was able to do, given the nature of things) to keep his pledge to cut defense spending.

III

WE HAVE, then, a new consensus on the need to respond more firmly and resolutely to the growth of Soviet power and to take extraordinary steps (extraordinary in that the defense budget is exempt from the demand arising out of the domestic side of the new consensus to cut federal spending all across the board) to arrest and reverse the decline of American power.

This new consensus embraces a solid majority of the American people, and it is also bipartisan, with Democrats (and a few Republicans like Mark Hatfield) dissenting only at the margin and on questions of degree. Even some of the most outspoken critics of American defense spending in the Senate supported an increase last year and voted to build the MX; and there are very few Democrats holding or aspiring to office who are willing to say in public (whatever they may think in the privacy of their own minds) that the growth of Soviet power is a statistical illusion conjured up by the Pentagon, or that the Soviets are interested only in security and peace and therefore pose no threat to the United States or anyone else.

Broad and solidly rooted and *national* though it is, however, the new consensus is as yet minimal. In saying this, I intend no denigration of what in my opinion is an immense achievement. The change in American political culture represented by the new consensus took years of ferocious struggle at those "bloody crossroads" where the late Lionel Trilling once said politics and culture meet. Some of the heroes of that struggle have now been rewarded with success at the polls. Others who work not in the polity but in the world of ideas and attitudes—the universities, the media—have been left with grievous wounds to their reputations that will not easily be healed and damage to their positions that will not easily be repaired even by the vindication they have now received.

Indeed, although the influence of the new consensus is evident even in the universities and the media, they remain, to a greater degree perhaps than any other sector of our culture, mired in yesterday's conventional wisdom. On these issues, as on so many others, the universities and the media —usually considered to be on the front lines of change, in the vanguard of opinion—have become the repository of discredited ideas and shopworn attitudes, a kind of shrine at which the cultists of a dying religion gather to genuflect, chanting mindless invocations they imagine arise out of reason to a moribund god they still believe incarnates the living truth.

Nevertheless, these cultists, though a small minority, remain numerous enough and sufficiently well placed to obstruct or retard the progress of the new consensus beyond the minimal point it has already, after so much struggle, managed to reach. They will continue their efforts to prove that it is the growth of American power rather than the growth of Soviet power which is the problem to be addressed. With a greater or lesser degree of candor, they will resist the new consensus and keep faith with the one it has replaced (in this at least establishing their claim to be dissenters—a claim that was fraudulent in the heyday of the old orthodoxy to which they slavishly adhered). And they will be ready to pounce at the first development—perhaps an American intervention or a new Soviet peace offensive—that might seem to confirm their case.

Among the expressions of the old orthodoxy there is a variant that cleverly builds on the new consensus in order to arrive at a strategy that is the exact opposite of the one to which the new consensus actually points. This variant does not deny that the Soviet Union has become more powerful and that the position of the United States has become much weaker than it once was. But instead of drawing the conclusion that we must act to restore or reverse the balance, it calls for a return to isolationism. Earl C. Ravenal,* the most outspoken and articulate exponent of this point of view, puts it this way: "In the aftermath of Afghanistan, the comfortable middle options have dropped away. The only alternative now to the official strategy of resuscitated military interventionism is an isolationist foreign policy."

Nor does Ravenal shrink from the implications of his position. "The casualties of a general nu-

* "Doing Nothing," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1980.

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clear war," he says, "might be 125 million Americans; the casualties of even a conventional regional war [to prevent the oil fields from falling into hostile hands] might be 50,000-100,000, and it would lose the oil anyway. The other way, Americans would live less well, but live."

What we have here, of course, is an updated version of the "Better red than dead" slogan of twenty years ago, but Ravenal is even bolder than his predecessors in this tradition. He is willing, as few of them were, to apply the same logic retroactively to the struggle against Hitler. "If . . . the United States has really reached 1939, it should rethink World War II, not prepare to fight World War III. Imagine Hitler with nuclear weapons. Who would fight and who would negotiate? Who would be the villains and who the heroes? Who would be ready to put 125 million of his fellow citizens' lives on the line to defend his values?"

The intellectual honesty here is as admirable as the position it serves is dishonorable. But moral considerations aside, the strategy of isolationism and appeasement cannot deliver on its promise of "survival for ourselves and perhaps for future generations." When Churchill said that World War II had been an unnecessary war, he meant that Hitler might have been stopped short of war if the democracies had rearmed in time. Since they did not, they led themselves ineluctably into a choice of surrendering or fighting; faced with that choice they decided (in defiance of Hitler's expectations —he thought they were decadent) to fight.

The prospect we face today—the future danger —is not, in my judgment, an unnecessary war but rather an unnecessary surrender. "Imagine Hitler with nuclear weapons," says Ravenal; it is easy to do so, one need only think of the Soviet Union. "Who would fight and who would negotiate?" Assuming no change in the present balance of power, and given the conviction of the Soviet Union that a nuclear war is not only thinkable but winnable —as against the American belief that a nuclear war would be the end of the world and therefore inconceivable if deterrence should fail to enforce restraint on the Soviet Union—the high probability is that in a situation comparable to 1939, the United States would surrender. "Who would be the villains and who the heroes?" There would be no heroes, but it is easy to say who the villains would be: those like Ravenal who by counseling and supporting a policy of appeasement had led us into such a situation when, by rebuilding our military power in time, we might have been spared both the need to fight and the need to surrender.

For the moment the counsels of appeasement are muted, but this school of thought will always be potentially influential, appealing as it does to natural fears and to fantasies of evasion, all couched in the language of "realism," "national maturity," and "survival." A scare similar to the Cuban missile crisis, only this time with the roles reversed and the United States forced to back away from an "eyeball-to-eyeball" confrontation, could energize the case for appeasement overnight, smoothing our slide into Finlandization with the assurance that if we surrendered all that would happen is that we "would live less well, but live."

IT IS, I take it, precisely this hideous conjunction of circumstances that Paul H. Nitze wishes to head off in telling us how to develop a "strategy from relative weakness."* Nitze, of course, accepts the new consensus. In fact, as much as any single individual in this country, he may be said to have created it. A founder and leader of the Committee on the Present Danger, and a tireless Churchillian voice sounding the alarm over the growth of Soviet power and the decline of our own, he has brought into play the unique authority of his long experience as a specialist in defense as well as in arms control (he helped to negotiate SALT I and then led the fight against ratification of SALT II).

From all this we would expect him to recommend an urgent program of rearmament; and he does. But he begins with a rehearsal of the facts that lead him to conclude that the military balance is already unfavorable to the United States "and that over the next five years it will probably become more unfavorable."

Thus: in the area of strategic nuclear weapons, the balance is now such that "If there were a strategic nuclear war, U.S. fatalities might be between five and twenty times those of the Soviet Union" and such a war would "end up with more powerful Soviet than U.S. strategic nuclear forces remaining after the exchanges as well as faster Soviet recovery times."

So too "the theater nuclear balance has also swung to a position adverse to the United States." As for the balance of conventional forces, it "has favored the Soviet side ever since World War II," and with "the decline in combat quality of the U.S. Army since Vietnam and the institution of the volunteer army, that balance has become even more negative."

So much for the land and the air. On the sea there are still areas where the balance remains favorable to the United States, but Nitze believes that "one cannot say that the overall naval force balance . . . is favorable." What all this means is that we would be unable to defend Saudi Arabia in the event of a Soviet invasion—certainly not with conventional forces and not even by threatening nuclear war:

> . . . the strategic nuclear balance has shifted so that any [conventional] moves on the Eurasian landmass would be affected by Soviet escalation

* "Policy and Strategy from Weakness," in *From Weakness to Strength*, W. Scott Thompson, ed. (Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1980).

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control: that is to say, Soviet nuclear predominance carries the implied threat of an ability to escalate a conflict up the nuclear ladder just as the U.S. predominance in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 implied such a threat to the Soviet Union.

The promise that Kuznetsov made to McCloy has, then, been kept. The danger we face is a Cuban missile crisis in reverse—and with our most vital interests at stake.

In spite of all this, Nitze, it goes without saying, counsels neither appeasement nor surrender. Speaking the language of the new consensus, he calls for a crash program of rearmament, with first priority given to repairing the strategic nuclear umbrella and the second to repairing the navy; he speaks also of reinstating the draft and of undertaking a program of civil defense. The trouble is that the time it takes to build new weapons systems is so great that "Even if we move resolutely and wisely to correct the adverse trends, [we] cannot do much to change the balance in less than ten or fifteen years."

What then are we to do in the meantime? We will, says Nitze, have to learn how to conduct "strategy from relative weakness." We will have to "recognize that the correlation of forces now is negative for us, that it is going to be negative for the next five years at least, and that the object of policy should be to throw dust in the enemy's eyes while getting on with reversing the trends and making them positive."

Throwing dust in the enemy's eyes involves becoming more aggressive in the waging of ideological and psychological warfare. Yet while I myself am if anything more enthusiastic than Nitze about the possibilities of greater aggressiveness in the war of ideas, I find it hard to understand why the Soviet Union should stand by passively while we are reversing the balance of power. *We* of course did precisely that in relation to them, when we deliberately decided to give up our advantage in strategic nuclear weapons in the expectation that the Soviets would rest content with parity and then cooperate with us in putting an end to the "arms race." But Nitze of all people should know—in fact, does know and has said many times—that the Soviets have been pursuing superiority in order to intimidate and ultimately dominate even without having to fight. Why then does he think that they will now follow in our footsteps, applauding (as we did with them) every step we take to close the gap between us?

"There is," Nitze writes, "no inherent reason, save a willful—and we hope unlikely—desire of the Soviet Union to confront us militarily in the near future, why we as a nation cannot conduct policy from an honest appraisal of our current position while refashioning our policies and forces and thus improve our position eventually to an honest parity." But on Nitze's own analysis, the Soviets have every reason "to confront us militarily in the near future." It is, as he himself tells us, in the near future that they will continue to enjoy a superiority which could easily be canceled by the coming together of a serious program of American rearmament and the decline in their own economic and technological capabilities that most experts expect to set in (for demographic and other reasons) during the latter part of the 80's.

With the stage thus set in the Persian Gulf for a Cuban missile crisis in reverse, why should the Soviets not provoke it, forcing us to back down as they seize control of the oil, and with it the power to dominate the West?

TO THIS question Nitze has no answer; he only has a hope. So of course do we all, but intellectual honesty requires us to place a minimum of faith in that hope and to acknowledge that if Nitze is right in his analysis—*and he may be*—then all is lost. If he is right, it can only be a year or two or three, no more, before a Cuban missile crisis in reverse is staged in the Persian Gulf, with the Finlandization of the West following inexorably in its wake.

Is Nitze right? About the present military balance he is almost certainly right: in that sense the obverse analogy with the Cuban missile crisis holds (though our strategic advantage in 1962 was much greater than theirs today). But as Robert W. Tucker points out,* there is a crucial difference between "the balance of interest" then and the balance of interest today. That is, Cuba was much less important to the Soviet Union in 1962 than the Persian Gulf is to the United States today. "By confronting us in the Gulf, the Russians would in effect confront us in Europe. . . . Indeed, by threatening our position in the Gulf, the Russians would in effect threaten our position everywhere but this hemisphere." (I would include this hemisphere.)

What this means is that our incentive to fight is so great that it must give the Soviets pause. They must assume that to confront us in the Persian Gulf—especially when we are so decisively outgunned in conventional forces—is to risk an all-out nuclear war.

Whether their estimate of the nuclear balance coincides with that of the optimists in this country who claim that a condition of rough strategic parity now exists (hardly anyone still believes that we still enjoy superiority); or whether the Soviets share Nitze's belief that they now enjoy a clear "nuclear predominance," and that they could fight a nuclear war and emerge as the victor—they would still obviously prefer to avoid the worst. Especially would they prefer it if they could prevail without fighting. Therefore, so long as they be-

* "American Power & the Persian Gulf," COMMENTARY, November 1980.

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lieve that we would fight a nuclear war rather than surrender our vital interests to their control, they will probably be deterred from trying to stage an obverse Cuban missile crisis in the Persian Gulf. This is why Tucker advocates the stationing of American ground forces in the Persian Gulf. Though part of their function would be to defend against non-Soviet threats to our access to the oil, they would also serve the same deterrent function our troops have served in Europe against a direct Soviet invasion.

By invading, the Soviets would automatically be at war with the United States; and given their advantage in conventional forces, such a war would almost certainly become nuclear.

So, at any rate, goes the theory upon whose credibility peace between the two nuclear superpowers has rested for more than thirty years. (Of course if the day ever arrived when the Soviets became convinced that we would back down even if our vital interests were at stake rather than risk, let alone fight, a nuclear war, the theory would collapse along with the United States itself. It would also collapse if the Soviets ever achieved a clear first-strike capability and could thereby present us with the choice of surrender or certain suicidal defeat.)

Thus for the time being there is a better chance than Nitze's analysis allows to avert a reverse Cuban missile crisis in the Persian Gulf. But it is a chance that depends on more than a strategy of throwing dust in the enemy's eyes while embarking on a five-to-ten year program of rearmament. The long-range program is certainly necessary, but in the meantime Tucker is right in arguing that we will, at a minimum, have to station ground forces in the Middle East. Otherwise there will be no credible deterrent to a Soviet invasion, or a Soviet-sponsored coup.

Granting this, the question arises as to what we can or should do beyond it. In other words, what is to be the guiding principle of the refurbished strategy of containment called for by the new consensus?

IV

In another piece, an ambitious and densely reasoned essay entitled "The Purposes of American Power,"* Tucker attempts to answer this question. "The containment of today and tomorrow," he says, will have to be more "limited" and more "moderate" than the containment of yesterday. Our "First priority is the restoration of American power generally and, above all, in the Persian Gulf"—and this, he reiterates, entails the stationing of American ground forces there.

While, in opposition to Nitze, he thinks that we are still powerful enough to undertake such a policy of containment, he also thinks that we are not powerful enough to return even to what he himself characterizes as "the moderate containment of the late 1940's." "The containment of today and tomorrow will have to make concessions and compromises in areas of contention where concession and compromise were once spurned."

Specifically, we are not to concern ourselves with the domestic character of other countries, and we are almost certainly not to intervene in support of one side or another in an internal dispute. We may not like it when a "radical"—that is, Marxist, or Marxist-Leninist, or Communist—regime comes to power, but (except in the Persian Gulf) the only "coherent policy is to observe a hands-off position."

Courageously taking on the argument at its most prickly point, Tucker applies this rule even to Central America. Even though it is an area that falls within our historic sphere of influence and one where "our pride is engaged as it cannot possibly be engaged" in Africa or in Southeast Asia, "In Central America there are no vital raw materials or minerals whose loss might provide the basis for legitimate security concerns." Therefore we should "view with equanimity" the coming to power there of radical Marxist regimes—so long, that is, as they do not "enter into a relationship with the Soviet Union that resembles the relationship with Cuba." This *would* in Tucker's judgment affect our vital interests.

That there are difficulties with this position is obvious. Thus, for example, even though in Africa there *are* "vital raw materials . . . whose loss might provide the basis for legitimate security concerns," Tucker would presumably oppose intervention there, including when (as in Angola) Soviet involvement is unambiguous. Conversely, one wonders how serious he is about supporting intervention to prevent the establishment of another Cuba in Central America when the evidence of indirect Soviet and direct Cuban influence in Nicaragua and El Salvador nevertheless leads him to advocate giving economic aid to the pro-Soviet Sandinistas in Nicaragua and cutting off military aid to the anti-Soviet junta in El Salvador.

It is perhaps for this reason that Tucker's position has found support among political commentators like Anthony Lewis of the New York *Times* who have generally been hostile to the very idea of American power and who might otherwise have been expected to react with horror to his call for so strong an anti-Soviet stand. In Tucker's conception of containment, it may be, such commentators have found a way of accommodating themselves to the new consensus without seriously endangering the essence of the old orthodoxy—that American power cannot be used to block Soviet expansionism and should not be used to prevent "radical" or "revolutionary" (i.e., Communist) regimes from establishing themselves in the Third

* *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1980/81.

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World. Lewis well knows that it will always be difficult to prove direct Soviet involvement in a given conflict—not even the overwhelming evidence compiled by the State Department in the case of El Salvador has convinced everyone—and that if American intervention has to wait upon such proof, the chances are that it will wait forever.

But leaving tactical problems aside for the moment, how viable is the overall strategy of moderate containment outlined by Tucker? On paper it is undoubtedly viable in the sense of being realistic in its view of the world and coherent in conception. It represents, moreover, a great advance over the prevalent ideas of the recent past. There are no illusions here about the transformation of the Soviet Union into a status-quo power, or about its readiness to cooperate with us in "crisis management," or about our ability to induce it to behave moderately. In fact, some of Tucker's best pages are devoted to a devastating critique of the strategy of "containment without confrontation" recommended by those like Robert Legvold* who use this phrase as a euphemism for a resurrected policy of détente. (Tucker's main point is that if the Soviets confounded our expectations of 1972 in a period when their incentives to cooperate were much greater, why should they behave better today, when the military balance has shifted in their favor and the temptations to score gains in the Third World have increased?)

In addition to being realistic about Soviet power and Soviet intentions, Tucker is hardheaded about the necessary American response. We need "to redress the overall arms balance, to insure Western access to the oil supplies of the Persian Gulf, and generally to restore confidence abroad that America has the understanding and the discipline to maintain a solvent foreign policy."

Though he describes these steps as "moderate containment," he himself is wryly aware that there are those to whom it would seem deserving of the epithet extremist. And indeed, this "moderate" or "limited" strategy of containment does call for very strong measures and very resolute nerves. It even goes so far as to insist upon the necessity of extending the threat of nuclear war from Europe to the Persian Gulf. It is limited, then, not in the military measures it contemplates but in the definition of the enemy. The enemy to be contained by this strategy is the Soviet Union, nothing and no one else.

What we have here, then, is containment as *Realpolitik*. Tucker is by no means blind to the importance of values or ideology in the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States, and he pauses from time to time to pay his obeisances to such factors. But like all writers in the *Realpolitik* tradition, he is much more comfortable with the categories of physical security and material interest, becoming suspicious and uneasy whenever the discussion shifts from geography or commerce or raw materials to talk of ideologies and values, of democracy and Communism. He dislikes "the sweeping language of the Truman Doctrine" (e.g., "We must assist free peoples to work out their destinies in their own way") and he fears "its sense of universal crisis" ("At the present moment in world history every nation must choose between alternative ways of life"). In language like that, he says, "we can see the subsequent course of a policy that led to the equation of American security with world order, world order with the containment of Communism, and the containment of Communism with the conflict —Vietnam—that brought an end to the policy of global containment."

For Tucker the great lesson of Vietnam, and the one that should guide us in fashioning a new policy of containment, is that an emphasis on "ideology" over "security" leads to disaster.

ATTRACTIVE though this position is, however, it no more amounts to a truly viable strategy than Nitze's "throwing dust in the enemy's eyes." In the case of Nitze's prescription, it is the Soviets who are the obstacle. In the case of Tucker's, it is the American people.

Analysts and theorists of the *Realpolitik* school have always lamented the absence in the United States of a geopolitical tradition in the shaping of foreign policy. From Hans J. Morgenthau and George F. Kennan in the 50's to Henry Kissinger and Robert W. Tucker today, they have been telling us that the time has come for the United States to stop oscillating so wildly between isolationism and Wilsonianism, between withdrawing from the world and sallying forth on moral crusades to save it.

Yet the truth is that however desirable it might be for the United States to "Europeanize" its relations with the rest of the world, no amount of exhortation is likely to transform the character of this country as it expresses itself, and has always expressed itself, in the conduct of foreign policy. (Considering that the European tradition of conducting international affairs has resulted in two world wars in the 20th century alone, one wonders, indeed, what makes it so self-evidently superior a model.) For better or worse, the Americans have always been and still are a people who have no fondness for "standing armies," and who are very reluctant to support such armies—let alone their deployment in war—merely for the sake of maintaining a balance of power among nations competing with more or less equal justification for position and advantage.

One of the "lessons of Vietnam" that is rarely mentioned is that public support became impossible to maintain in the absence of a convincing

* "Containment Without Confrontation," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1980.

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moral rationale for our effort there. Having, paradoxically, gone into Vietnam for idealistic reasons (in the strict sense that there was no vital geopolitical or material interest at stake, and that what we were actually trying to do was save the South Vietnamese from the horrors of Communist rule that have now befallen them), we then tried to justify our involvement in the language of *Realpolitik*. But no good case could be made in that language for American military intervention; and even if it could, it would not in the long run have convinced the American people.

The same lesson can be drawn from the decline of support for military spending in the 1970's. To some extent the anti-defense climate that developed in those years was a product of revulsion against Vietnam. But the policy of détente was an even greater source of nourishment. By representing the Soviet Union as a competing superpower with whom we could negotiate peaceful and stable accommodations—instead of a Communist state hostile in its very nature to us and trying to extend its rule and its political culture over a wider and wider area of the world—the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations robbed the Soviet-American conflict of the moral and political dimension for the sake of which sacrifices could be intelligibly demanded by the government and willingly made by the people.

No wonder, then, that the country drifted into apathy in response to the growth of Soviet power on the one side and the decline of American power on the other. What, after all, did it matter? Even if the Soviet Union really were to seize the oil fields of the Persian Gulf, what real difference would it make to us? To Tucker the Persian Gulf "forms the indispensable key to the defense of the American global position, just as it forms the indispensable key without which the Soviet Union cannot seriously aspire to global predominance." But if the Soviet Union is only another superpower—just as we ourselves are—why risk nuclear war to hold it back? If the Soviets were to take over the oil fields, might they not even prove a more reliable supplier than the Arabs?

There have been those who thought so. In an editorial bouncily entitled "Soviet Gas Won't Choke the Allies" (January 16, 1981) and supporting an arrangement that would make the West Europeans highly dependent on the Soviet Union for supplies of natural gas, the New York *Times* assured us that "The Soviet Union is probably a much more reliable supplier than OPEC, certainly more reliable than the mercurial regimes of Iran, Libya, and Iraq" and expressed its confidence that the Soviets would never use the threat of a cut-off to enforce political demands.

As has so often been the case in recent years, the attitude of the American people on this issue is sounder than the ideas of their leaders and putative betters. American public opinion, as we have seen, has not viewed Soviet control of our energy supplies with equanimity. But would public opinion continue to support the huge increases in defense spending that even Tucker's strategy of limited containment requires, and the risks of confrontation that he freely admits would flow from such a strategy, if the Soviet Union were seen as nothing more than another superpower bent on aggrandizing itself? Would not a nearly irresistible isolationist pressure arise from the depths of the national psyche, allowing the Soviets to control what they could (including even Western Europe), seeking protection from actual Soviet conquest of the United States in an invulnerable second-strike capability—the kind of nuclear Maginot line recommended by theorists of "minimal deterrence"—and counting on the Soviets to behave toward us in strict accordance with whatever economic deals we might persuade them to accept?

What I am suggesting, in short, is that a strategy of containment centered on considerations of *Realpolitik* would be unable to count indefinitely on popular support. Sooner or later (probably sooner rather than later) it would succumb to a resurgence of isolationism, leaving a free field for the expansion of Soviet power. Since in my judgment the United States would be unable to maintain itself for very long as a free society if it were an island surrounded by a sea of varying shades of red, the strategy of limited containment would turn out to be a long detour on the road to Finlandization.

V

But if the Soviets will not allow us to follow Nitze's strategy of throwing dust in their eyes while we are racing to close the military gap between us, and if the American people will not allow us to follow Tucker's strategy of containing Soviet expansion while looking with equanimity upon the expansion of Communism, what is to be done? The obvious answer is that we will have to adopt a strategy aimed at containing the expansion of Communism.

In its recent "white paper" on El Salvador, the State Department made surprisingly free use of the word Communism, but anyone attempting to introduce, or rather reintroduce, that word into the discussion of these matters within the intellectual community is certain to encounter shock and resistance. This, more than anything else, is the ironic legacy left to our political culture and our political discourse by McCarthyism. Euphemisms like "radical" or "revolutionary" or "progressive" or "far-Left" or "Marxist" or even "Marxist-Leninist" are permitted, but the word Communism itself has been interdicted, banished, excommunicated. So effective has the ban become that even when someone joins the Communist party and proudly calls himself a Communist, the term is

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avoided in the press. Thus, for example, Angela Davis, who not only belongs to the Communist Party U.S.A. but ran for Vice President on its ticket in the 1980 election, is still rarely described by the media as a Communist; she remains a "black militant."

It is understandable that a word whose loose application once damaged many people of whom it was mistakenly or ignorantly or maliciously used should have become suspect in itself. It is also understandable that the term Communist, which in the past accurately designated obedience to the dictates of a party under the control of the Soviet Union, should have been discarded as misleading once several national parties, most notably the Chinese, had broken out of the Soviet orbit. The term Communist once clearly meant pro-Soviet or Soviet-controlled; by now it can mean anti-Soviet, or pro-Chinese, or even neutral with respect to both.

Nevertheless, to deny ourselves the use of this term is to make intellectual clarity, and therefore also clarity of purpose, more difficult to achieve. To begin with, until we can talk about Communism again, we will be unable to explain—above all to ourselves, but also to others—why the Soviet Union poses so mortal a threat. There are those who tell us that Communism is no longer a significant factor in Soviet policy, that no one there still really believes in Marx or even Lenin. Some who tell us this admit that the Soviet Union is expansionist, but the purpose as they interpret it is not to export Communism. Rather it is to follow through on age-old Russian imperial ambitions (the Czarist search for a warm-water port, for example, forming in this view the ground for the invasion of Afghanistan).

Unlike the idea that the Soviet Union is neither Communist nor expansionist, this interpretation at least has the merit of recognizing the Soviet Union's imperialistic ambitions. Indeed, the model pointed to by this school of Sovietology is Germany in the pre-World War I period—an expansionist power whose objectives, however, were limited to achieving what it regarded as a fair share of the imperial spoils. In other words, while this Germany, Wilhelmine Germany, was expansionist, it did not seek to overthrow the going international system. Its conflict with its adversaries was not a struggle between competing civilizations or ideologies but a quarrel within the same family of nations (literally so, since the monarchs of most of these countries were cousins).

But if the Soviet Union of today resembles the Germany of the past, it is not the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm but the Germany of Adolf Hitler. Unlike Wilhelmine Germany, but like Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union is a totalitarian state. Unlike Wilhelmine Germany but like Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union represents a radically different idea about how to organize social, political, and economic life on this earth from the one that prevails in the world of its adversaries. And unlike Wilhelmine Germany but like Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union aims to overthrow the present international system and to replace it with one in which its own power is dominant and its own political culture becomes the model and the norm.

IN SUM: the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union is a clash between two civilizations. More accurately, it is a clash between civilization and barbarism. What makes the Soviet Union barbaric is, precisely, Communism—a system that assumes the right of total control over every aspect of life, that denies any degree of freedom to the individual, that brings economic misery and cultural starvation to all who live under it. Whether or not the rulers of the Soviet Union "believe" in Communism, they are themselves slaves to it in the sense that it supplies the only legitimation of their rule (who elected them? who appointed them?); and whether or not they "believe" in expansionism, their claim to leadership cannot be validated unless they remain true to the international mission dictated by the same ideology that keeps them in power at home.

One need not go as far as Solzhenitsyn does in seeing Russia as the entirely innocent victim of an alien ideology to recognize that the threat we face comes not from Russia but from the Soviet Union —that is, from *Communist* Russia. A non-Communist Russia might still be expansionist and still pose problems, but it would hardly pose the kind of menace to us that Communism has made of that country. For since the defeat of fascism in World War II, Communism has emerged as the single greatest threat to liberty on the face of the earth. It is, today, the only such threat that is backed by the military might of a major power—a nation, as Sakharov says, "armed to the teeth" and inescapably committed to the evangelism of the sword. But whereas fascism—and still more Nazism, its most malignant variant—lacked widespread ideological appeal and depended entirely on force to impose its influence (a condition that remains true of fascist regimes today), Communism has proved itself a threat to liberty in the world of ideas as well.

This ideological threat has undoubtedly grown weaker in recent years than it used to be (just as the military component of the threat has grown stronger). Neither in the Soviet Union, nor in its East European colonies, nor at the moment in mainland China do the doctrines of Marx and Lenin or the "praxis" of Stalin and Mao seem to arouse much enthusiasm. Yet what this demonstrates is only that the people who actually live under Communism sooner or later cease believing in it and even come to hate it. In the non-Communist world, on the other hand, illusions about

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Communism continue to enjoy an amazingly hardy existence.

It is true that some Communist parties in the West which used to look to the Soviet Union as a workers' paradise and as a model for their own future have lost a bit of their pro-Soviet fervor. But despite optimistic forecasts, these parties have not renounced Communism (nor, except as concerns Soviet intervention into other Communist countries, have they opposed Soviet foreign policy to any significant degree). All they have done is to shift their utopian claims from the Soviet present to a thus-far nonexistent future when, against all the evidence of the past sixty years, "Communism with a human face" will make its smiling appearance in the world.

It is also true that many non-Communist intellectuals in the West, and especially in France, have with the help of Solzhenitsyn's books finally begun freeing themselves from the mystique of revolution which turned so many of them for so long into apologists for the Soviet Union. Some, like Bernard-Henri Lévy, have even gone further and located the seeds of the Gulag in the previously sacred scriptures of Marx himself. Yet the poisoning of the intellectual wells, the corruption of key terms like *freedom* and *democracy* by Marxist thought and Communist praxis, remains an obstacle to a proper appreciation of the free societies of the West, and the concomitant willingness—or indeed ability—to defend them against ideological attack.

IT IS, however, in the Third World rather than in the United States or Europe that Communism remains the greatest ideological menace. We are often told that the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of Third World leaders should not be taken seriously; all they really are is nationalists struggling to achieve independence and an identity of their own. But it was ideas—Communist ideas, some of them absorbed in the cafés of Paris—that turned Cambodia into the Auschwitz of Asia, that created a new Gulag in Communist Vietnam, that sent Cuban troops into Africa and the Middle East.

All these countries are Soviet clients and dependencies. But whether they are allied to the Soviet Union or not—and even though the appeal of Soviet-style Communism may have declined in Western Europe—it is the Marxist-Leninist ideology of such movements as SWAPO in Namibia, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and the leftist guerrillas in El Salvador, that accounts for the sympathy they invariably get in the West.

When, for example, the Socialist International, representing the social-democratic parties of the West, throws its support behind these movements, the assumption is that they will create better regimes than the ones against which they have gone to war. There was a time when democratic socialists like Willy Brandt understood that Communist regimes could not be expected to make things better for the people who lived under them, but that time has long since passed. Today Brandt and his fellow socialists are a major exception to the rule that non-Communist intellectuals in Europe have become more critical of the Soviet Union and of Communism in general than they used to be; the Socialist International has been moving in exactly the opposite direction. And nowhere does this new tendency show itself more clearly than in the SI's policy toward Central America.

Yet if we wonder on what the assumption guiding this policy is based, the answer cannot be the experience of Third World countries under Communism. Are the Cubans today better off than they were under Batista? Ask the many thousands who have already left and the countless other thousands who are clamoring to get out. Are the South Vietnamese better off under the rule of the North than they were under Thieu? Ask the boat people. Are the Cambodians better off as Kampucheans? Ask the grave.

Why then take it for granted that the Sandinistas, once they consolidate their power, or the FDR in El Salvador if it succeeds in toppling the junta, will be different? The only answer can be that the ideological commitment to "socialism" is enough to establish a legitimate claim for support of a movement fighting any regime of the Right.

So much for the contention that ideology has become irrelevant; so much too for the argument that Communism no longer has any ideological appeal. But a word also needs to be said about the obstacle posed by Communism—again, whether or not allied to the Soviet Union—to the development of institutions under which human rights can flourish.

The fact that talk of human rights trips so glibly off the tongues of many whose sympathies lie with Communist insurgencies like the one in El Salvador should not blind us to the moral impudence involved here. For human rights have invariably fared worse under Communism than under the regimes it has replaced. I have already mentioned the most hideous illustrations of this rule, but it is important to understand that the horrors perpetrated by Communists in power are not accidental or arbitrary. They follow from the totalitarian nature of Communist regimes.

As writers from Hannah Arendt in the 50's to Jeane Kirkpatrick today have been trying to tell us, there is a fundamental distinction between Communist regimes and the more traditional authoritarian regimes of the Right we are familiar with in the Third World. The main and often only source of repression in the latter is their determination to eliminate *political* opposition. Communist regimes, by contrast, permit no area of life to escape the control of the state. Even authoritarian regimes at their worst generally allow more

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freedom—economic, cultural, religious—than the mildest of Communist states; this indeed is the main reason non-Communist autocracies can sometimes be overthrown or even peacefully replaced by democratic regimes (as in Spain, Portugal, and Greece). But not a single country has ever broken free once the Communist yoke has been forced onto its neck; and to this day not a single country (with the possible exception of Chile where Allende was elected by 35 percent of the vote and where he was overthrown before he had a chance to turn the country into a full-fledged Communist state) has ever voluntarily submitted to that yoke. Not one, not ever.

To oppose Communism in the world of ideas and ideologies is therefore in itself a necessary condition of fighting for human rights; anyone who fails to oppose Communism forfeits the intellectual and moral right to speak in the name of human rights. And this is equally true of opposing the spread of Communism—which means the establishment of totalitarian rule and the virtual destruction of any hope of eventual democratization—in practice.

In an attack on the signs of a resumption by the Reagan administration of friendly American relations with Argentina and South Korea, the columnist Richard Reeves,* misapplying a statement once made by Daniel Patrick Moynihan at the UN, writes: "We are Americans. If we are not for freedom, what are we for?" Indeed we are for freedom, which is why we should prefer authoritarian regimes of the Right to the totalitarian states of the Communist world.

At the same time, where a democratic opposition exists in those authoritarian regimes, our sympathies will naturally be drawn to it. But the question always arises as to whether encouraging such an opposition and putting pressure on the authorities to give it freer rein will so weaken them as to lead eventually to their overthrow and replacement by something worse—worse both from the point of view of the people there and from the standpoint of American interests.

As the case of Iran demonstrates, the worse alternative need not be a Communist state; yet as things go in the contemporary world, it usually is. When another columnist, Hodding Carter III† (who served as the State Department spokesman under Carter), sneers at the welcome given by President Reagan to "that resolute guardian of his subjects' freedom, the current South Korean dictator," his smug sarcasm blinds him to the fact the Chun *is* the resolute guardian of South Korea's freedom: its freedom from a takeover by North Korea which would result (as the example of Vietnam should have taught Mr. Carter and everyone else once and for all) in a society that would make South Korea even at its most repressive look like a libertarian paradise.

Is there then nothing the United States can do to encourage the gradual liberalization of countries like South Korea, Taiwan, Argentina, etc.? The answer is that there are things we can do, but our pressures have to be guided by the rule of prudence. They must be informed, that is, with a greater sense of the local conditions and dangers than we have shown in the recent past. Otherwise, in the name of promoting human rights, we will—as we already have in Iran and Nicaragua—find ourselves cooperating in the replacement of a lesser evil by a greater one.

VI

The same rule of prudence—the same practical political wisdom—is the only protection against the obverse danger of a strategy aimed at the containment of Communism. This danger is the "globalism" that so worries Tucker and others because in their view it is what drove us into Vietnam in the past and could be expected to generate an equivalent disaster in the future.

But was it anti-Communism that drove us into Vietnam? In a sense, of course, it was: we went in to prevent a Communist takeover of the South. Yet even at the time there were those like Hans J. Morgenthau who opposed military intervention not because they were against the objective of holding the line against the spread of Communism (or because they thought we had no moral right to do so, or because they sympathized more or less frankly with the Communist side). They opposed intervention because they believed that Vietnam was "the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time." This was a prudential judgment that turned out to be right: the United States was in the event unwilling to pay the price of victory, and was therefore doomed to lose the war and suffer consequent political damage both at home and abroad.

Of all the putative "lessons of Vietnam," the most important is the one least frequently mentioned: never to undertake a military operation without the will and the means (including the domestic political support) to win. The "best and the brightest" who led us into Vietnam were in fact neither the best nor the brightest. Typically they were arrogant and singularly unendowed with prudential intelligence. Is there any guarantee that an anti-Communist strategy of containment would be applied in the future with greater prudence—with a more finely tuned feel *both* for the limits and the extent of our power? The answer is no—although those who are now warning us against indiscriminate interventionism remind me of the Pope in Latin America warning people who have only just begun to afford wearing shoes

* New York *Daily News*, February 19, 1981.
† *Wall Street Journal*, February 19, 1981.

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about the dangers of consumerism and rampant materialism. No doubt the danger is there, but it is not the most urgent or immediate one we face.

The other great criticism of an anti-Communist strategy is that it would rob us of the ability to exploit the many divisions in the Communist world. Most significantly, would it not rule out cooperation with China? No more, and no less, I would say, than the fight against Hitler ruled out an alliance with Stalin, an equally malevolent totalitarian tyrant. For here too the rule of prudence applies, permitting tactical flexibility within an overall strategy. As Hitler was the more dangerous evil at that moment, and as Stalin for reasons of his own (which were not the same as ours) joined in the war to defeat the common enemy, we were justified—indeed required—by prudential considerations to do what we did.

There is thus no reason why an anti-Communist strategy would preclude a temporary tactical alliance with Communist China against the Soviet Union. But the same rule of prudence that allows for this alliance also provokes serious doubts about its advisability. In World War II, the Soviet Union was strong enough to make a major contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany. But is Communist China a comparable asset in our struggle with the Soviet Union? In terms of actual military capability, obviously not. Admittedly a hostile China requires the Soviet Union to pin down some 45 divisions on its eastern borders that might otherwise be deployed in the West. Yet those divisions were not put on the Chinese border in the first place because of anything we did or did not do. Nor are they likely to be removed by any act of our own.

Therefore it is hard to see what benefits accrue to us from helping to build up the Chinese economically and militarily. On the other hand, it is easy to spell out the risks. In helping one Communist country while struggling against another, we risk a loss of clarity about our purposes just at a time when we have a chance to regain such clarity. We also risk helping to create an additional menace to our children and grandchildren.

Of course if, as we often hear, China is really in the process of abandoning Communism and becoming "Americanized," these risks would simply evaporate. But while the evidence for this theory of Chinese development is intriguing, the historical record must inspire skepticism. No Communist regime has ever abandoned Communism. Furthermore, there are precedents in the Soviet experience itself for the kind of internal changes now taking place in China, as well as for alliances with "bourgeois" nations. Yet neither the loosening up of the Soviet economy at various times nor the popular-front strategy of the late 30's resulted in an alteration of the country's basic totalitarian structure or in the discarding of the ideological imperatives of Marxism-Leninism. If there is any reason to believe that China will prove to be different, it has yet to make itself manifest.

THE third great argument against an anti-Communist strategy of containment is that it would, in the words of the regnant cliché of this debate, "put us on the wrong side of history." The theory here is only a version of the historical determinism that forms so crucial a part of the Marxist scheme of things. It is an attenuated version in that it assumes a vague tendency toward the triumph of the Left rather than an iron law dictating the eventual overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat; and it is sanitized in that it does not refer explicitly to the Communist party as the only possible leader of the process. Translated into these relatively bland terms, with the radical spice and bite removed, the idea has been rendered fit for liberal consumption.

From the tenacity with which it has taken hold, one might suppose that the evidence for it is so overwhelming as to be irresistible to any rational person. Yet the odd truth is that, like so many ideas in the Marxist canon, this one has been confounded over and over again by that very history whose laws Marx purported to have discovered. If anything is clear from the experience of these matters over the past century, it is that the only inevitable law of history is that Marx's predictions will not come true. Thus in defiance of the conditions Marx had specified, Russia became the first Communist state; Germany, which he supposed would enjoy this honor, declined it and went the other way; nor did the "internal contradictions" of capitalism lead to the increasing impoverishment of the working class or to the emergence of a revolutionary proletariat; and so on and on into the endless night of a tiresome debate that, on the evidence, should have been settled ages ago.

Belief in the inevitable triumph of "socialism" has led to the conviction that the United States should not oppose, and in some instances should even sponsor, the establishment of "socialist" regimes. In addition to putting us on the side of the "progressive" tide of history against the "reactionary" forces trying in vain to hold it back, this strategy has sometimes been represented as a better way of containing Soviet expansionism than a policy that defines Marxists as the enemy. By opposing the Marxists, we "drive them into the arms" of the Soviet Union; conversely, by helping them, we can limit the extent of Soviet influence.

I once described this peculiar strategy of containment as "saving Communism from the Russians,"* and I pointed to the comedy of the fact that so many people who had always ridiculed the old Wilsonian idea of using American power to make the world safe for democracy were urging us

* "Making the World Safe for Communism," COMMENTARY, April 1976.

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to use it for the truly ridiculous purpose of "making the world safe for Communism in a variety of national forms." I found it hard then, and I find it hard still, to understand why the United States should cooperate in the spread of a political culture hostile to our own and inimical to the welfare of the people under its sway.

It may well be that in certain instances we can do nothing to *prevent* the spread of this culture; and where that is the case, we have no prudent alternative but to make the best of things. But why should we help it along? And why should we not stand in its way wherever we can prudently do so? Such a policy cannot put us on the wrong or indeed on the right side of history: history has no side. But it can put us on the side of liberty, which is where we belong and where we have a duty both to our own interests and to our ideals to be.

VII

IN ADVOCATING an anti-Communist strategy of containment, however, am I calling for an eternity of confrontation and the risk of war without let-up, without surcease, and without any hope of victory at the end? It would be dishonest and a species of cant to deny that this might indeed be the prospect. It is a horrifying prospect from which one's first impulse is to shrink. But the prospect from the other side is more horrifying still: a universal Gulag and a life that is otherwise nasty, brutish, and short.

If, however, it would be cant to deny that an anti-Communist strategy holds out the possibility of an endless stalemate—a kind of cold-war equivalent of World War I—it would be conversely wrong to fall into what the late C.P. Snow once called "sentimental cynicism" by failing to acknowledge the possibility of a much brighter prospect as well.

Almost thirty-five years ago, when George F. Kennan (under the pseudonym of Mr. X) outlined the original strategy of containment in his historic essay, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," he addressed himself to the same question of what could be hoped for from "a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies" involving "the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy." Kennan's answer was that by holding the Soviets behind the lines drawn at the end of World War II, we would promote "tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power."

This would, Kennan thought, take about fifteen years. Fifteen years later, however, came the Cuban missile crisis, which as we have seen promoted neither the breakup nor the mellowing of Soviet power but a tremendous increase in that power, and the beginnings of American involvement in Vietnam, which led to an equally spectacular decline of American power. Yet even though his timing was so badly off, Kennan's prediction may still have been at least partially sound. Today, thirty-five years after his essay was published, hardly anyone but Kennan himself still hopes for the mellowing of Soviet power, but there is a more reasonable ground than ever for hope of a breakup of Soviet power.

To Kennan in 1947 it seemed "that Soviet power, like the capitalist world of its conception, bears within it the seeds of its own decay, and that the sprouting of these seeds is well advanced." They were not, evidently, quite so well advanced as he imagined. Today, however, buds and even flowers have begun to become visible.

Within the heartland of the Soviet empire both the agricultural and the highly developed technological sectors remain dependent on Western help. Economic and demographic problems are bound to grow more and more severe as the Russian majority begins giving way to a less advanced and less productive Muslim population. We even hear of a "health crisis" which has brought life expectancy within the Soviet Union to a lower point than it was under Stalin, when so many millions were murdered.* Moving outside the heartland and into the empire, we find Poland to the West exerting an even greater political challenge to Communist rule than Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968; and we find Afghanistan to the South still offering resistance against a Soviet army 85,000-strong.

There are those who cite these facts, and others like them, to support the argument that the United States has nothing to fear from the Soviet Union. We do not, they contend, need to rearm or to strengthen our position in the Persian Gulf; we need only stand by and watch as the Soviets sink helplessly into a Vietnam-like "quagmire" in Afghanistan and as they lose control of their East European satellites. But the only reason Vietnam became a quagmire for us is that the Soviet Union gave the Communists there the arms with which to fight and ultimately win. Unless we do the same for the Afghans, the Soviets will simply wipe out the resistance at a cost they are entirely willing and easily able to afford.

Interestingly, those who counsel passivity toward Afghanistan are invariably among the voices calling on us to help the Communist authorities in Poland satisfy the economic demands of the newly—and temporarily?—independent unions. As Congressman Les Aspin† puts it: "... we could help underwrite a peaceful resolution of the eco-

* Nick Eberstadt, "The Coming Health Crisis in the USSR," *New York Review of Books*, February 19, 1981.

† New York *Times*, February 6, 1981.

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nomic and political crisis. For Warsaw and Moscow, the price would be toleration of an independent source of political authority: Solidarity." William Safire* of the New York *Times*, recognizing that the Soviets are unlikely to accept such a condition, or to honor it if they did, has a better suggestion: "Let the Russians," he writes, who imposed an unworkable economic system on Poland which has pushed it into bankruptcy, "bail it out": "If they cannot pay the costs of their imperialism, let them withdraw to their own borders." Safire knows, of course, that they will not withdraw; therefore "we should let history take its course." This means refusing to help the Soviets evade the choice of once again using military force to repress a movement for greater freedom within its imperial domains.

LISTENING to certain Europeans and their American counterparts, we hear no expressions of admiration for the nobility—another word that ought to be reintroduced into our political discourse—shown by the Afghans and the Poles. We hear only of hypocritical plans for the neutralization of Afghanistan and plaintive prophecies to the effect that a Soviet invasion of Poland would be the worst thing that could happen to the Poles. How do these people know? Might not a Soviet invasion be the worst thing that could happen to the Soviets? Might they not encounter a degree of resistance from the Poles they did not meet with in Hungary or Czechoslovakia? And might this not trigger other uprisings against Soviet rule?

In any case, if the people of Poland, fighting for freedom, are willing to risk a Soviet invasion, how dare we join with their totalitarian rulers in trying to buy them off? Have we sunk so low in our fear of trouble that we are no longer even able to respond with anything other than trepidation to the spectacle of political courage?

It is ironic—to use the mildest possible term—that the very people who keep informing us that imperialism has had its day simultaneously talk as though the Soviet empire, the last great empire on earth, must be regarded as eternal. The Roman empire was not eternal, the British empire was not eternal, but the Soviet empire is. If we ask why, their answer is that its breakup would be too dangerous. It would be a convulsion sucking others in and leading in all probability to a new world war.

Unquestionably the breakup of the Soviet empire would be dangerous. But the alternative is even more dangerous: it is, in the words of Deputy Prime Minister Rajaratnam† of Singapore, "a socialist world order under Soviet leadership." He goes on:

> If the non-Communist industrial powers cannot roll back the rising tide of Soviet power, then the small nations of Asia and of the Third World generally must come to terms with the new Caesar. In fact, I know that many Asian countries are already, mentally, trying out Pax Sovietica for size. "Better red than dead," if repeated long enough might, hopefully, exorcise their time-sanctioned fears about having to live under a Communist world leader.

What Rajaratnam is saying is that the internal problems of the Soviet Union, and even the problems at its imperial frontiers, can be overcome by the classic imperial technique of further expansion.

If, however, we can deny them this outlet, the internal pressures already boiling behind their present imperial borders will mount of their own accord. To deny them means refraining (as in Poland) from cooperating with them in cooling such pressures off. It also means turning up the heat where the opportunity presents itself. Sending arms to the Afghans is one example; another is backing the pro-Western guerrilla force of Jonas Savimbi against the Soviet puppet regime in Angola. These are measures that carry a very low risk of direct confrontation with the Soviet Union. Indeed, they amount to nothing more than doing unto them what they have been doing to us for a very long time.

VIII

THERE are commentators like Tucker who think the new consensus provides no mandate for so ideological a policy and one so global in its reach. Others believe that the new consensus would be only too happy to support an anti-Communist foreign policy, but they fear the domestic repercussions. Going on an anti-Communist "crusade" would, they warn, bring back all the horrors of McCarthyism; already they detect a "whiff" of it in the air. But if McCarthyism means holding people guilty by association and damaging them with loose charges, then there has in recent years been not a "whiff" of it in the air but a powerful stench, only it has come from the Left rather than the Right.

Naturally it is the McCarthyites of the Left who are now raising the loudest alarms over a resurgence of the old McCarthyism (which they sometimes seem almost to crave in the expectation that it might pump the blood back into their hardening ideological arteries). A good example is the *Nation*, which has run several pieces since the election of Reagan announcing the arrival of the new McCarthyism. One of these pieces was written by the same member of the editorial board who produced an attack on Jeane Kirkpatrick, after her appointment as Ambassador to the UN, in which he referred to "two brothers, Lyman and Evron Kirkpatrick. The former served for years

* New York *Times*, February 12, 1981.
† Washington *Star*, February 1, 1981.

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with the Central Intelligence Agency. The latter [was] Jeane's husband. . . ."* Now Lyman Kirkpatrick is *not* the brother of Jeane Kirkpatrick's husband; they are in fact not related at all, and his service with the CIA (at least that detail is accurate) has no bearing of any kind on her. Though some of us may have difficulty in understanding why there is anything wrong with working for the CIA, if we remind ourselves that what Communism was to Joe McCarthy, the CIA is to the *Nation*, we can recognize here a classic McCarthyite smear: the assumption of guilt by association with even the evidence for the association turning out to be false.

Be that as it may, at a time when it is still widely regarded as illegitimate to call a Communist a Communist, the fear that liberals or socialists are in imminent danger of being smeared as Communists seems at the very least premature. It is the political counterpart of the fear that we are about to overreach ourselves in the use of military power when the real question is whether we have enough power at the moment to do anything with it at all. This fear of overreaching easily translates into an argument for a "restraint" indistinguishable in practice from supine passivity. Similarly, the alarm over a new McCarthyism becomes a polemical weapon with which preemptive strikes are launched against any criticism; when criticism does manage to get through, the same weapon is used to discredit it.

It is, indeed, precisely because the only effective way to fight such ideas is with strong and candid criticism that those within the New Right who want to revive instrumentalities of the old McCarthyism like the congressional investigation are making a great mistake. First of all, a new wave of congressional investigations into "internal security"—even if it were conducted with a scrupulous regard for due process and avoided all the sins of the old—would only create sympathy for what would be represented as a martyred cause. Secondly, it would disarm those of us trying to fight the radical Left in the world of ideas (which is, after all, where its power mainly resides). We would be inhibited in our criticism for fear that it might call the authorities down upon the heads of people whose proper punishment is to be discredited intellectually and morally and thereby deprived of influence in the court of informed opinion rather than in a court of law. The old McCarthyism led to the crippling of anti-Communism in the intellectual community for an entire generation, with immense consequent damage to the political consciousness of the past twenty years. A new McCarthyism would do even greater damage in the climate of today.

For despite the hysteria of both the Left and the Right, the climate of today—the new consensus—is not a mandate for "counterrevolution" and "witch-hunts." What it demands at this stage is a massive effort to reverse the decline of American power and to hold the line against the Soviet drive for imperial hegemony. There is no trace of vindictiveness in this demand. On the contrary: its emotional quality is best reflected in the amazingly even-tempered but strong personality of the man it chose to satisfy it.

IN THE early days of Ronald Reagan's administration, he has shown every sign of fidelity to the new consensus, both in spirit and in substance. Without resort to demagogy and without even attacking his opponents, he has, as he promised he would do, moved to reverse the decline of American military power by exempting defense spending from the budgetary cuts which form part of his strategy for reversing the correlative decline of American economic power. He has moved toward an unambiguous stand against Soviet expansionism in the Western hemisphere. And he has spoken of stationing American ground forces in the Middle East as a deterrent and a trip-wire.

It is important to recognize that none of this goes beyond the strategy of "limited" containment as outlined by Tucker. Even the very strong stand on El Salvador taken by the new Secretary of State bases itself on the need to hold back Soviet expansionism and not on the wish to prevent the establishment of a Communist regime there.

Indeed, when Secretary Haig speaks of establishing "norms of international behavior" to govern the conduct of both the Soviet Union and the United States, he even seems to be invoking the 1972 Basic Principles of Détente as the objective toward which a new strategy of containment should aspire. Yet as he must surely know, experience suggests that no such arrangement is possible. Within months of signing the 1972 document, the Soviets violated one of its main provisions by encouraging the Egyptian attack on Israel instead of using their influence to dampen down a conflict between third parties that could—and in the event did—pull the superpowers themselves into a direct confrontation.

Since then, the Soviets have made it plain over and over again that they will never bind themselves to the "rules" of any "game" which would prevent them from intervening to consolidate "socialism" where it already exists (this is known as the Brezhnev Doctrine) or from helping to establish it wherever the opportunity arises. "The armies of socialism," they say, "march in only one direction." The Soviets justify all this not in terms of national security nor even in the language of *Realpolitik* but on moral grounds: "socialism" is superior to any alternative system and they have a duty to make it prevail.

We for our part have not yet begun saying as much for liberty. We have not, for example, been

* "Jeane's Designs," *Nation*, February 7, 1981.

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saying that taking steps to save El Salvador from Communism is more than a matter of preserving an American sphere of influence; that it is also a matter of sparing the people of that country from the ravages of a system far worse in itself than the government it seeks to replace and far more destructive of the chance of future improvement. Nor have we been emphatic enough in rejecting the argument that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is morally comparable to American intervention in Latin America. And we have not been saying that a Soviet invasion of Poland would be immoral less because it would violate another country's territorial integrity—Poland, after all, is already a colony of the Soviet empire—than because it would represent the extirpation of a nascent possibility of freedom by the armies of Communist totalitarianism.

The Reagan administration, in short, while losing no time in coping with the present danger, has thus far taken no clearly visible steps to deal with the future danger—the danger that a strategy of containment which defines the problem as Soviet expansionism alone will be unable to sustain the requisite political support and will therefore lead almost as surely as the retrenchments of the Carter era to the Soviet-dominated world that Rajaratnam, writing toward the end of that era, pronounced to be "inevitable" by the end of the 1980's.

A strategy of limited containment to deal with the present danger does not go far enough to head off this, the future danger. Only a strategy based on the containment of Communism can confound Rajaratnam's prophecy. That there are terrible risks in implementing such a strategy is true and has to be acknowledged and faced. But what has to be equally emphasized is that an anti-Communist strategy holds out a double hope. It holds out the hope of a breakup of the Soviet empire, and it thereby offers the prospect of a world in which for the first time since the Russian revolution countries under Communist rule might succeed in throwing off the yoke, in which Communism would lose the last vestiges of its appeal, and in which the free institutions and the prosperity we in the West have enjoyed would have a much better chance of spreading and finding local nourishment.

If such a world is not worth taking risks for, what is?

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Ideology & Supply-Side Economics

Irving Kristol

THE terms being applied—by the media, by politicians, by economists—to President Reagan's economic program, and most particularly to the tax-cutting aspect of this program, are "bold," "revolutionary," "a risky experiment," and so on. Clearly, a great many people are nervous about "supply-side" economics, and seem to have difficulty understanding its rationale. This is quite odd. For there is nothing really bold, or revolutionary, or experimental about this program. Nor is it at all difficult to understand.

Indeed, the trouble with the thing we call supply-side economics is that it is just too simple, too easy to understand. Accustomed as we are to the increasing complexity of the natural sciences, and the occult jargon of the social sciences, we are inclined to be suspicious of transparent simplicity, which we are likely to equate with naiveté or wishful thinking. The average person, listening to an exposition of supply-side economics, will nod his head at every point—but, after it is done, will remain incredulous: if it is that obvious, what is the fuss and controversy all about? The average economist, on the other hand, is only too likely to be indignant, outraged, and contemptuously dismissive: what is the point of his hard-won expertise in sophisticated economic theory if economic policy can be reduced to such plain terms?

It must be said that the term itself, "supply-side economics," may be a source of initial confusion. It originates in deliberate contrast to the prevailing Keynesian approach, which emphasizes the need for government to manage and manipulate—through fiscal and monetary policies—aggregate demand so as to maintain full employment. Supply-side economists say government cannot really do this, no matter how many clever economists it hires, but that if business enterprise is permitted to function with a minimum of interference, it will invest and innovate, so as to *create* the requisite demand for the goods it produces.

There is certainly a difference in perspective here. Supply-side economists look at the economy from ground level, as it were—i.e., from the point of view of the entrepreneurs and investors who are identified as the prime movers. Keynesian economists look at the economy from above—from the standpoint of a government that is a *deus ex machina*, and which, in its omniscience, intervenes discreetly to preserve a harmonious economic universe. But it is wrong to infer that we live in a Manichean world in which Supply and Demand are continually at odds, so that we always are having to declare allegiance to one as against the other. They are, rather, opposite sides of the same coin, coexisting of necessity, and there can be no question of *choosing* between them.

More precisely, it is absurd *economically* to think in terms of such a choice. Beyond a certain point, a tax on production becomes a tax on consumption—the goods become too expensive and demand falls. Similarly, beyond a certain point a tax on consumption becomes a tax on production —the decrease in demand inhibits supply. Shifting taxes from the one to the other may provide marginal benefits on occasion. But a tax on commercial transactions and economic activity is always a tax on *both* production and consumption.

When, however, one moves from a purely analytical-economic mode of thought to a political-ideological one—when, in short, one moves from economic analysis to economic policy—then the difference in perspective has significant implications. Supply-side economics naturally gives rise to an emhasis on growth, not redistribution. It aims at improving everyone's economic circumstances over time, but not necessarily in the same degree or in the same period of time. The aggregate demand created by economic activity, as seen from the supply-side, is indifferent to the issue of equality. Its bias is consequently in favor of a free market for economic activity, because this provides the most powerful economic incentives for investment, innovation, and growth. Those, on the other hand, for whom economic equality is at least as important as economic growth will always want to see government "restructure" this aggregate demand and will be indifferent to the issue of economic incentives.

However, there is another—incidental but important—source of controversy which has already been referred to, and that is the threat that sup-

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ply-side economics represents to the economics profession as at present constituted. There can be little doubt that the nature of the controversy would be a lot clearer, and we would all be less befuddled, if it were not for the fact that so many distinguished economists are publicly accusing supply-side economics of being inconsistent with the principles of economic science as these are taught in graduate school and incarnated in, say, articles in the *American Economic Review*. To make matters worse, the accusation has a lot of truth in it, which is why so much of the writing in favor of supply-side economics originates outside the academic universe.

Thus one cannot understand the controversy over supply-side economics without paying some attention to the condition of the economics profession and to its vested interests, both intellectual and material. This condition is, at the moment, painfully ambiguous.

For more than three decades, we have all been looking to our best economists for guidance on economic policy. To that end we even established, after World War II, an extraordinary institution called the Council of Economic Advisers: three economists, with staff, who are supposed to provide the President and Congress with *authoritative* guidance on our economic problems, prospects, and policies. One must emphasize that word, "authoritative." Those economists are not brought to Washington to offer their personal opinions, but rather to provide us with expert, scientific advice.

From what do their authority and expertise derive? They derive from the ambitious reconstruction of economic science after World War II in which the scheme of Keynesian macroeconomics was wedded to new, rigorous, analytical, largely mathematical techniques so as to provide, not a general, abstract model of the economic "system" —the 19th century gave us that—but a specific model of *our* economy at *this* particular time. Such a model consists of hundreds of complex correlations, spawned by econometric research, which relate one aspect of our national economic activity to another (or to many others), all fed into a computer which, having been properly programmed, can inform us as to where our economy has been coming from (to adopt a useful term from another part of the culture), where it is now, and whither it is drifting. It is this enterprise, which has come to be called "the neoclassical synthesis," or "neo-Keynesian" economics, that has defined the nature of economic expertise, the acquisition of which is the dominant goal of graduate studies. And because a mastery of advanced mathematics has been so crucial to the enterprise, economists have secured the mantle of a true scientific elite—often incomprehensible, always indispensable.

It all went reasonably well for a couple of decades, though just *what* went reasonably well is itself one source of controversy. The neo-Keynesians will say that their sound analysis and good advice were at least partly responsible for our healthy economy from 1945 to 1970. Critics will argue that it was the existence of a healthy economy, created by businessmen and statesmen blissfully ignorant of sophisticated economic theories, that permitted economists to bask in a kind of reflected glory. (These critics point to the remarkable economic recoveries of Germany and Japan in a period when those nations had yet to learn of the neoclassical synthesis.)

But there can be no dispute over the fact that, beginning around 1970, it ceased going well and began to go badly. Not only were those annual forecasts too often very wide of the mark (especially with regard to inflation), but our economics establishment—for that is what it is, by now—could not explain the phenomonon of "stagflation," a combination of inflation and lagging economic growth that neo-Keynesian theory regards as an impossibility. A note of desperation began to creep into the writings of the economists themselves. Professors of economics who had for years patiently explained to their students the folly (in peacetime) of wage and price and rent controls suddenly began to look upon them with a more sympathetic eye.

But for such a prescription one does not need economists. Ever since the beginnings of time, governments have been quite capable of thinking up such peremptory "solutions" to their economic problems all by themselves. The equivalent in politics is rule under martial law—no doubt necessary in extreme emergencies, but not a subject on which political theory or political philosophy has anything to say.

Simultaneously, and inevitably, a great many people began to take a hard and critical look at the presuppositions of neo-Keynesian economics—and, above all, at the model of the economy upon which it relies. That there are some anomalies in this model had always been conceded. Thus, since the wages of cleaning women are counted in the Gross National Product while the labor of housewives is not, one could easily achieve a huge increase in GNP—and presumably we would all be wealthier—if every housewife were to rent herself out to do her neighbor's cleaning instead of doing her own cleaning herself. Similarly, there has always been a problem about "investment" by governments: the typical macroeconomics model is incapable of distinguishing among the building of roads, the building of warships, and the building of pyramids, all of which are counted simply as "expenditures," though their *economic* status is obviously very disparate. And there are other difficulties with the model that many economists have been aware of, but which they also have thought

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could be regarded merely as a limitation of models *per se*, rather than a serious flaw in this particular model.

THE new critique of the neo-Keynesian model, however, went far beyond such relatively familiar anomalies. Essentially it asserted that *this kind* of model, for all its complexity and sophistication—or one can even say because of its complexity and sophistication—reveals profound misconceptions about the nature of economic behavior, and especially about the kind of economic behavior that leads to economic growth.

It is important to realize that the conventional models are utterly blind to entrepreneurship and innovation (technological or otherwise). They can deal with quantifiable aggregates (like "investment") but what cannot be quantified they ignore. Basically, theirs is a kind of Newtonian model of an economic system, with all the "forces" balancing each other out—except sometimes, when (for reasons still unclear) there is a mismatch between overall supply and overall demand, on which occasions the government, like some benign deity, pumps in the missing quantity of demand and restores the system to equilibrium. All specifically human motivations, intentions, aspirations are ignored. It is the results of past human *behavior* that the model blandly reflects, and always after the fact. In a sense, the revolt against neo-Keynesian economics is part of a larger revulsion, visible in other social sciences as well, against behaviorism as an adequate guide to human reality.

Economists attuned to the theories incarnated in such models cannot explain the "whys" of economic phenomena. They cannot, for instance, explain why economies grow, and why some economies grow faster than others. They try to come up with such an explanation, of course. By now the literature on "growth theory"—much of it mathematical and arcane—fills a good-sized library. But as our current textbooks on economic growth will admit, after hundreds of pages in which the various theories of diverse economists are adumbrated, there is nothing near a consensus about this issue.

Is that surprising? Only if we forget that economics is still a "social" science—the most methodologically rigorous of them all, to be sure, but still a social science—and not a "natural" science like physics or chemistry. We are hardly astonished, after all, if our political scientists fail to come up with a rigorous theory of political change, or if our sociologists fail to come up with a rigorous theory of social change, one which informs us precisely and authoritatively as to where our polity and society have been, where they are, where they are going. That is because we understand intuitively that any such theory, dealing with human beings, would require a degree of self-knowledge—of our present characters and personalities, from which we could make strong inferences as to our future motivations and actions—which is, by the nature of things, unavailable. (If we had any such complete self-knowledge we would be God—the Being in Whom thought and existence are one.) But economics, in striving to become an objective and positive science like physics, has promised us exactly this kind of self-knowledge, at least insofar as we are economic men and women. It has not been able to deliver on such a grandiose promise—has, in truth, reached a dead end in its efforts to do so.

In all fairness, one must say that not all economists have been coopted into this ambitious intellectual enterprise. The "neo-Austrians," headed by Friedrich Hayek, have always been very skeptical of the utility of such mathematical models, and of the ability of economic analysis to provide the kind of exact, quantitative answers—how much? how long? when?—that politicians naturally yearn for (and the media always assume to be available). The neo-Marxists, too, more interested in the dynamics of economic change than in the static calibrations of economic phenomena at any one point in time, have made trenchant criticisms of the prevailing mode of economic theorizing. But the economics profession as a whole remains committed to the neoclassical or neo-Keynesian synthesis, and practically every course in macroeconomics introduces the student to it.

SUPPLY-SIDE ECONOMICS may be viewed as a kind of "humanistic" rebellion against the mathematical-mechanical type of economic analysis in which economic aggregates, themselves dubious in nature, are related to one another so as to achieve a supposedly accurate series of snapshots of the economic universe we inhabit—something comparable to the universe we perceive when we go to a planetarium. Supply-side economics is uninterested in such a beautifully architected equilibrium because it believes this is the wrong paradigm for understanding an economy that consists of the *purposive* yet *inconstant* behavior of millions of individuals. Purposive, because economic behavior generally has as its goal the improvement of one's economic conditions. Inconstant, because only the individual himself can define "improvement" for us, and his behavior will be profoundly influenced by all sorts of contingent factors—religious heritage, family relations, and, not least, the actions of government.

So far from being new or revolutionary, supply-side economics is frankly reactionary. "Back to Adam Smith" can be fairly designated as its motto. Not, however, in the sense of returning to some purist version of laisser-faire—all supply-siders agree (as would have Adam Smith, author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*) that, when a

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society is sufficiently affluent to provide a safety net for those unable to participate fully in the economy, we all have a moral obligation to see that such provision is made. "Back to Adam Smith" has to be understood, rather, as "Back to *The Wealth of Nations*" as the paradigm for economic reasoning—a book that makes sense to any literate person with some worldly experience (as distinct from book-learning which often inclines the reader toward otherworldliness). It may sound incredible, but supply-side economics really does believe that, if you want an economic education, *The Wealth of Nations* is still the best book to read. Indeed, the publicists of supply-side economics—Jude Wanniski in *The Way the World Works* and George Gilder in *Wealth and Poverty*—will readily allow that their books are but elaborations on themes by Adam Smith.

NOTHING conveys more clearly the radically different perspectives on economic activity of supply-side and neo-Keynesian theory than the issue of incentives. It is an issue about which much confusion exists, and the confusion arises because contemporary economists are uneducated in the world of business, i.e., in the world of *real* economic activity. They are trained instead in the world of economic analysis, which stands in relation to business as academic political science stands in relation to politics. It is a distant relation, which easily warps one's perspective.

Political scientists know that it is ambition which energizes the political system, but in their models—and yes, they have them—ambition is simply taken for granted, as a constant in magnitude and quality. Similarly, all economists know that incentives energize the economic system, but in their models they take incentives for granted, as a constant in magnitude and quality. In both cases, the reason is the same: since political ambition and economic incentives are essentially subjective and non-measurable essences, there is no place for them in an objective, quantified model.

Supply-side economics takes incentives—the innate human impulse to better one's condition, as Adam Smith would put it—as the *fons et origo* of economic activity and, most important, of economic growth. We do indeed know of primitive cultures where that impulse is either weak or missing—and where economic growth is, as a consequence, also weak or missing. We know, too, of historical societies where the impulse has been frustrated by religious or political authorities—and where economic growth has been sporadic and cyclical. It is only with the emergence of a modern, commercial civilization, in which self-interested transactions in the marketplace are morally vindicated and politically tolerated, that the impulse to better one's condition becomes translated into steady, progressive economic growth over decades and centuries.

Now, one way of frustrating that impulse, and economic growth as well, is to tax it. This accords with both common sense and common observation. As a matter of fact, it is a proposition that any economist, even the most devoted neo-Keynesian, will casually agree to. But when you suggest that one way of encouraging economic growth is to *decrease* the taxes on economic activity, many of these same economists will suddenly and inexplicably balk.

This balkiness is unquestionably ideological. These are people who are persuaded that the "collective goods" our taxes pay for—not only public works but also a more equal distribution of income—give us fair value, if not in purely economic terms. This is a perfectly sensible argument in defense of a tax system, but it is rarely made in the United States in 1981, presumably because it is not so evident that our taxes are actually getting us our "money's worth" in those collective goods. Instead, these economists engage in the most curious kind of research to refute the notion that anyone's incentive will be affected by a cut in taxes.

This research involves polling people, asking them whether they will work harder if their taxes are cut by 10 percent or 20 percent—or will they, perhaps, just consume more, by way of goods or leisure? Such studies often find that it makes little or no difference. And such studies are not worth the paper they are printed on—they are parodies of what economic analysis should be.

Who on earth ever said that, in a commercial society such as ours, we achieve economic growth by having to work harder? On the contrary: the whole point of economic growth is that people should work *less hard*—but more productively. The human impulse to work less hard is just as strong as the human impulse to better one's condition—always has been, one suspects always will be. It is the genius of market capitalism to satisfy both of these impulses at once by encouraging entrepreneurship, the incentive to innovate, among that minority of human beings who are, unlike most of us, peculiarly "economic activists." The existence of such human beings—of entrepreneurs who, by innovating, make us all more productive without necessarily being less lazy*—is simply ignored in the atomistic poll data or the aggregate statistics that economists so solemnly analyze.

It does not matter in the least whether you or I will respond to a tax cut by sharpening our economic incentives. Some of us will, some of us will not. What does matter is that there is, out there, in the real business world as distinct from the aca-

* We are, incidentally, too easily inclined to think of such innovation as being primarily technological. But Henry Ford did not invent the automobile, only the assembly line, on which auto workers worked less hard, over shorter hours, but more productively than had previously been the case.

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demic world of the economists, a minority who will respond in this way—not necessarily the nicest people, not necessarily the smartest people, but the ones who, for whatever reason, relish economic success. For such people, the incentives to save and invest (and invest again) are extraordinarily powerful, and it is the incentives of these "economic activists" that are blunted and thwarted by a heavy tax burden. True, if we knew who they were in advance, we could cut only *their* taxes. But we only know who they are after the fact.

STILL, taxes do have to be paid to acquire the necessary and desirable level of public services, and the question is immediately posed: how do we know, in fact, that taxes are *too* high? To put it another way: how do we know, since people do value many of those public services (if in varying measure), that our tax level is so high as to have a deleterious effect on economic incentives? This brings us to the so-called "Laffer curve," a simple but powerful concept that is not in the least new—one can find an excellent summary of it by Ibn Khaldun in the 14th century.

All that the Laffer curve says is that, *after a certain point*, a tax—or the tax level as a whole—can become counterproductive. It is the point at which people experience taxes as an excessive and unfair burden—they are not getting their "money's worth" for the tax they pay—with the result that their incentives to economic activity are adversely affected. The tax, in effect, *represses* economic activity to such an extent that, if it were substantially reduced, the government would end up collecting more in tax revenues, since there would be a lot more economic activity contributing to these tax revenues.

None of this is controversial; every economist would concede the general validity of the point; every citizen, from his own experience, can provide anecdotal confirmation. (Under Prohibition, when the tax on liquor was 100 percent, the government's tax revenues were zero; when the tax was lowered, revenues sharply increased.) The question that academic critics of the Laffer curve raise is whether the American tax system has gone beyond the point of diminishing returns. "How do we know this?" they ask querulously. "Prove it," they demand. To judge by last November's election results, a clear majority of Americans are already convinced. But academic economists want *academic* proof—not, one suspects, because of their devotion to pure science, but because they would really prefer that government collect money and redistribute it more equally than see everyone improve his condition unequally through untrammeled economic growth.

The academic question as to whether we are beyond the point of diminishing returns in our tax system is unanswerable in strictly academic terms. It is a matter for *political* judgment, since it all depends on how people *feel* about the level of taxation. In wartime they feel one way; in peacetime, another. Yes, people always do grumble about taxes, at just about any level, but they don't always do something about it. They don't always make strenuous efforts to avoid or evade; they don't always regard overtime (at time-and-a-half pay) with indifference or hostility. On the other hand, a housewife thinking of entering the job market will certainly think twice if her take-home pay barely covers the cost of the babysitter.

Though one cannot provide the kind of elegant, mathematical proof economists wish, there are in fact some persuasive signs that the American economy has gone too far up on the Laffer curve. One is our flourishing (because untaxed) underground economy—just how large it is, no one knows; but that it is very much larger today than yesterday, no one can deny. This underground economy is a new phenomenon in American society, and a most unhealthy one.

Another such sign is the tens of billions of dollars that seek and find legal tax shelters, investments that would not exist except for their relative tax advantage and which are therefore, by definition as it were, uneconomic. The volume of such commercial transactions, based on tax evasion and tax avoidance, is so enormous that even a slight shift, resulting from a lowering of tax rates, would bring substantial tax revenues to the Treasury. More precise than this, one cannot be; but in any case the demand for precise estimates of revenues gained and lost as a result of a decrease in tax rates is largely a smokescreen. The real opposition to the Laffer curve has less to do with economics than with liberal egalitarianism.

If the Laffer curve indicated that a cut *only* in tax rates for those in the lower-income bracket would pay for itself in recouped tax revenues, the demand for precision would vanish overnight. It cannot, however, show any such thing, since the major portion of our income tax is paid by people in upper-income brackets. (That is where the income is.) Does anyone really think that, even if we could prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that reducing the tax rates on more affluent Americans would result in their actually paying more in taxes than they now do, the reductions would become less controversial? There are many people, including quite a few economists, for whom it is more important to have a symbolic tax rate of 70 percent on very high incomes even if very few of the rich actually pay it, than to have an effective tax rate of, say, 40 percent which many of the rich would pay instead of fooling around with (often problematic) tax shelters.

BUT there are some thoughtful people who, having little quarrel with the general tenor of supply-side economics, neverthe-

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less wonder whether it is appropriate in today's inflationary economy. It is these people, genuinely concerned about inflation as our overriding problem, who feel that cuts in tax rates, for rich and poor alike, should wait upon our prior success in bringing down the rate of inflation. Since many of these critics of Kemp-Roth are themselves conservatives who supported Ronald Reagan—one thinks of Arthur Burns, Herbert Stein, and presumably Paul Volcker—and since their criticism is clearly not ideological, they are all the more influential, especially within the financial and business communities.

For such as these, it is not the tax cuts themselves that are "bold" and "radical" but the fact that they are being contemplated in a particular economic environment, i.e., one of an unprecedentedly high and sustained peacetime rate of inflation. And it is their disinterested concern over this issue which has served to fuel the criticisms of others who, while warning solemnly against "radical experimentation" in economic policy, have a different species of fish to fry.

The conservative case against reliance on supply-side economics in present circumstances cannot be lightly dismissed. It has a long and solid tradition of classical economic thought behind it. The only question is whether *it* is relevant to today's environment, both economic *and* political.

That classical tradition has its own policy for coping with inflation. And, in truth, it is a policy that has always worked. It involves slowing down the rate of growth of the money supply to bring it in line with the growth in productivity. It also involves reducing governmental expenditures and bringing the budget into balance—this, to preclude the necessity of the Federal Reserve Board "monetizing" a deficit. Both of these measures, taken jointly, induce a recession, during which all of the distortions caused by inflation are "purged" from (or "wrung out of") the economic system. After the recession has achieved this effect, a normal economic recovery may be expected to set in, and non-inflationary growth is once again possible.

That is the prescription, and it is a prescription for recession as a cure for inflation. This must be emphasized because, understandably enough, its advocates tend not to stress it. Only Hayek has been candid enough to say openly that we *need* a recession. Unfortunately, many of the politicians and businessmen who are swayed by these arguments do not, on their own, fully comprehend the implications of those arguments.

I have noted that these policies have in fact worked in the past. But would they work under the present, truly novel, circumstances? Can they even be tried under these circumstances? The answer to the first question is: probably not. The answer to the second is: certainly not.

One of the novel things about our present economic condition is not merely the endemic high inflation but the existence of a welfare state. This means that as the economy slows down, government expenditures actually increase, as the number of people who are now "in need" increases, and all sorts of welfare programs are triggered. The deficit, instead of going down, tends to go up—especially since tax revenues are also decreasing. As a result, whereas a relatively shallow and short-lived recession could do the trick in a pre-welfare state economy, what is now required is a deep and prolonged recession. (This is what Margaret Thatcher has discovered, to her dismay.) The economic costs of such a recession are so enormous as to make it a most questionable instrument of policy.

And the political costs are, to put it bluntly, intolerable. In this decade of the 1980's, no administration, no political party—certainly not this Republican administration or the Republican party—can survive association with policies that bring on a long and severe recession. Once upon a time, in a different world, it was possible; it no longer is. All those politicians who are now, in innocence and good faith, advocating such policies would be the first to panic when the recession arrived, and would predictably opt for any scheme at hand, to deal with it.

That is why the Reagan administration has added a cut in tax rates, for business firms and individuals, to the traditional dual strategy of fighting inflation by slowing down the growth of the money supply and of government spending. It is the only possible answer to our predicament—encouraging economic growth so as to annul or at least ameliorate the recessionary effects of other anti-inflationary policies.

Some hostile economists have triumphantly pointed out that what we have here is a case of policies moving in opposite directions. Yes—and so does the policy of providing poor people with both welfare and job opportunities at the same time. Mixed solutions of this kind are as appropriate to economic policy as to social policy, and for the same reason: they are the only solutions that, under the circumstances, make practical sense.

WILL it work? There are plenty of good reasons for thinking it will. True, it might temporarily increase the deficit and the national debt—but if the predicted growth eventually occurs, both deficit and debt will be imposed on a larger and stronger economy which can easily support them.

Moreover, we do have some solid historical evidence that the "feedback" effects of cuts in tax rates, in terms of increased tax revenues, are always larger than our economists and Treasury officials—whose econometric models cannot cope with such "feedback" effects—expect to be the

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case. This is what happened with the Kennedy-Johnson tax cuts which were as large, in terms of the 1964 economy, as the Reagan tax cuts are in the 1981 economy. There is no reason why it should not happen again.

One final point, often overlooked. Because of the increase in social-security taxes that has taken effect this year, and because of automatic "bracket creep" in the income tax resulting from inflation, we shall in effect be experiencing something like a $40-billion tax *increase* in 1981. No economist of any persuasion, no politician of any persuasion, no commentator (liberal or conservative) has been heard to say that such a tax increase would be good for the economy in its present condition. Yet many of these same people are volubly disturbed by a tax cut that will, in 1981, at best keep our tax burden in a steady state, and in 1982 only alleviate it modestly.

Somehow, the current condition of economic theory, combined with existing ideological trends, has given us a level of public discourse on economic policy that is disgracefully inadequate to our economic and political realities. No one, critical though he may be, seems even to feel the need to offer a practicable alternative to Reagan's economic policy. One even suspects that many critics of supply-side economics want above all to see it fail, since its success would threaten their ideological investments.

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France vs. Israel

Sally Baumann Reynolds

SINCE the end of the Algerian war in 1962, France has pursued a policy of steady rapprochement with the Arabs while periodically acknowledging the security needs of Israel and declaring an official neutrality in the Middle East conflict. To many, the adoption by France of the role of advocate of the Arab cause within the Western camp has seemed either blind or cynical. The fact is that the formulation of French policy in the Middle East has had very little to do with the actual geopolitical situation there, despite pretensions and diplomatic casuistry to the contrary, and much to do with France's own domestic scene—its politics, economy, sociological makeup, self-image, and world view.

Throughout the years of the Fourth Republic and the early years of the Fifth, France and Israel were each other's principal friend and ally in their respective regions. Close cooperation prevailed, especially in the areas of military and nuclear development. Israel was confident that this friendship was founded on solemn commitments made by France throughout the years of the Fourth Republic. The strong military alliance grew out of the fact that France and Israel shared a common enemy: Nasser's Egypt, supplier of the Algerian NLF as well as a threat to Israel. Although uneasy about France's colonialist policy in Algeria, Israel abstained from direct opposition.

When de Gaulle came to power, he changed little at first, only cutting off cooperation in the fields of nuclear development and intelligence. During the last years of the Algerian war, Israel hailed de Gaulle's policy of self-determination for the Algerians as an enlightened principle which could well apply to Israel's own situation. Protestations of friendship, and arms shipments, continued, even though diplomatic relations began to cool rapidly after the signing of the Evian accords which ended the Algerian war in 1962. The diplomatic turning point came in 1965 with the visit to Paris of Marshal Amer, the Vice President of Egypt. As the political commentator Eric Rouleau wrote at the time: "The high spot of the meeting was the speech by General de Gaulle in which he wiped out all the features of the 'sneering *bikbachi*' with which President Nasser had been caricatured ever since Suez, and described him as a wise and farsighted statesman, energetically leading the 'new Egypt' on a course parallel to that of the 'new France.'"

The widening breach between theory and practice became a chasm in 1967, when France cut off the supply of arms to Israel. Although it is difficult to know exactly how long de Gaulle premeditated this first embargo, it is clear that it was not imposed as punishment for Israel's preemptive strike in the Six-Day War. Evidence for this is the little-known fact that de Gaulle summoned the Israeli consul on June 3, two days before the outbreak of the war, to announce unofficially that France was about to halt the shipment of the $60-million worth of arms which Israel purchased annually. In addition, while Nasser was setting the trap on the Sinai border, de Gaulle was willy nilly an accomplice on the diplomatic front when he announced in advance that France would condemn whoever fired first in the impending conflict. As Raymond Aron commented: "The threatened condemnation of whoever fired the first shot was a stroke of genius—it created an impression of neutrality while in fact making neutrality impossible. It undermined French public opinion, which was largely pro-Israel even though it also wished for peace."

Later, when asked if the reimposed embargo of January 1968 would not cripple the Israeli army, a Gaullist official replied, "We have too high a respect for Israel's resourcefulness to believe that." This comment suggests that de Gaulle intended to force the diplomatic burden of arming Israel on the United States, so that France might regain a neutral position and, hence, a stronger international role. It is true that France had also placed an arms embargo on Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan, even though Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq had never been equipped with French weapons. The Soviet Union, in any case, did not impose a similar embargo on *its* client states, and the result was a very sudden instability in the balance of power in the Middle East, by means of which France lost rather than reinforced what neutrality it had. Predictably, the Arabs were thrilled and the Israelis shocked at de Gaulle's new position.

Since the end of de Gaulle's Presidency, the

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style of foreign policy has changed but not its direction. The governments of the Fifth Republic have adopted, successively, the following positions:

- The need for a comprehensive peace settlement, formulated, imposed, and guaranteed by the four great powers.
- Withdrawal of Israeli troops behind (somewhat modified) pre-June 1967 borders.
- The internationalization of Jerusalem.
- The assumption by Israel of the major share of responsibility for resolving the Palestinian refugee problem.
- Recognition of the Palestinian refugees as a "people" with "legitimate rights" (in the 1973 "Declaration of the Nine," in the formulation of which French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert is said to have played a primary role).
- A belief in the possibility of forming a sovereign Palestinian state on the West Bank.
- Skepticism concerning the Camp David agreement.
- A desire to amend UN Resolution 242 so that it declares the "right of the Palestinian people to self-determination."
- A call for participation by the PLO in peace negotiations.

THE U.S. has, so far, held France in check on the issue of amending Resolution 242. As for a PLO role in negotiations, the other European countries persuaded France at the Venice summit early last summer to approve a milder statement than the one Giscard d'Estaing wanted. Indeed, the catchword of French Middle East diplomacy is now "self-determination," a liberal-sounding concept which has only recently begun to receive the critical inspection it deserves. The French notion, as elaborated in the Algerian crisis, would come very near to recognizing the Palestinians as a sovereign people, and could easily be interpreted as *de facto* recognition of the PLO. (It is ironic that this Gaullist concept, which won approval in Israel during the Algerian conflict, should now seem to threaten its own national security.) Giscard still considers it "premature" to receive Arafat in Paris, although he has met with some PLO representatives; his ex-Foreign Minister did meet publicly with Arafat.

THE influences on the formulation of French foreign policy are manifold. Article 52 of the Constitution places responsibility in this area primarily with the President, who "negotiates *and* ratifies treaties" (emphasis added). The personal prestige accumulated by de Gaulle, combined with the extensive powers granted to him by the Constitution when he became President of the Fifth Republic in 1958, led to a concentration of executive power in foreign-policy matters greater than that of any other Western democracy.

This does not mean that the President does not consult. For example, during the May-June 1967 crisis de Gaulle made use of a series of memoranda submitted to him by agencies and individuals at his request. Apparently de Gaulle also relied heavily on Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, the ex-ambassador to Egypt. However, there appear to have been no organized, collective consultations, and the decisions that were subsequently made upset de Gaulle's own government. As one observer, Marc Ullman, noted at the time: "With several Ministers of State having strong reservations, the parliamentary majority shaken up, such indispensable bastions of government as the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defense almost in a state of revolt, his own staff at the Elysée Palace divided among themselves—this is the price General de Gaulle has had to pay for the manner in which he conducted French policy in the Middle East."

The situation has not changed greatly today. On the one hand, intelligent public debate is limited by a secretive President, a cooperative self-censoring press, and a state-controlled radio-television industry. On the other hand, legislators, ministers, diplomats, and bureaucrats are not encouraged to participate actively in the formulation of policy or decision-making. They may deliberate or advise at the request of the President, but their main function is to implement the executive's decisions. (In any case, today's heavily Gaullist Assembly would tend to press for more rather than less rapprochement with the Arabs. Couve de Murville is currently chairman of the Parliament's foreign-affairs committee.)

Although insulated from unsolicited professional criticism, de Gaulle and his successors have paid close attention to French public opinion and adjusted their foreign policies accordingly. This is no easy task, considering the complexity and contradictoriness of French opinion.

In general, the French people have leaned favorably toward Israel. Statistics compiled at any given moment, however, can show some twists. For example a poll taken by the French Institute of Public Opinion during June 1967 showed that 56 percent of the French people sympathized with Israel, and 59 percent approved of de Gaulle's position. At the same time, 44 percent believed de Gaulle's position was neutral; 27 percent perceived de Gaulle's position as more favorable to the Israelis than to the Arabs. These latter figures are rather mystifying. How could so many Frenchmen interpret de Gaulle's "evenhanded" arms embargo as more favorable to Israel than to the Egyptians, unless they were not informed that it was the Russians, not the French, who had been supplying Egypt?

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Yet public opinion in France is infinitely more complex than any opinion poll could ever reflect. In 1967 the Arab-Israeli crisis split every significant political grouping, except the small centrist parties. The radical Left, the Communists, the Socialists, the Gaullists, and even the Jews, who affiliate with all these groups, were divided on the issue. The situation produced strange bedfellows: Gaullists and Communists on the more or less pro-Arab side; reactionary ex-colonials, military men, centrists, and many Socialists on the pro-Israel side.

Moreover, while there were only two sides to choose between, a multiplicity of different and finely shaded motives affected the eventual choice of various groups and individuals. As French political scientist Guy Feuer explained: "Whether it be a question of pro-Israelis, pro-Arabs, or intermediate categories, the motivations of all these groups are so numerous and so diverse, they can be combined according to so many different schemes, that it is impossible to classify them into homogeneous categories." Thus, the ideological spectrum exploded into a veritable kaleidoscope of opinions, which could fluctuate over time depending on which side appeared to be the more threatened. This explains in part Raymond Aron's wistful comment in 1968 on the declining support for Israel: "De Gaulle had promised to intervene if Israel were in danger of annihilation. . . . These were the feelings of most Frenchmen. . . . Probably these feelings have, with the passage of time, lost some of their original freshness and simplicity. We feared the destruction of a state. Then suddenly—this nation ... won an astonishing victory and, *having saved its life, risked losing its soul.* The soldiers of Israel had become an occupation army."

THE direct effects of public opinion on the President are impossible to define exactly. Still, public opinion is the political air that all elected officials are forced to breathe. It is certain that in order to consolidate their positions, the three Presidents of the Fifth Republic have listened carefully, especially to the Left opposition. Generally sympathetic to the Arab cause, the Left has possessed an intellectual prestige far surpassing its actual political strength. De Gaulle's method of dealing with the Left was to outbid and in some cases to coopt it, especially in areas of foreign policy; Giscard's has been to appease and conciliate.

De Gaulle managed to outmaneuver the Left by associating himself with foreign liberation causes. Reminding the world that France was a "friend and champion of human liberation," de Gaulle rang out in 1964:

> Besides the countless actions and encouragements which we have lavished, over the centuries, to assist the emancipation of oppressed peoples or individuals, and besides the spiritual and cultural influences which, starting in our country, have spread in the same direction in all parts of the world, the mark of what we gave to others to raise their condition, in all places where we found ourselves, is blazingly engraved on many souls and on many soils.

These lofty words radiate the very French culture to which de Gaulle alluded.

It is possible that sincere if misguided humanitarian sentiments are what led de Gaulle to take up the anti-Israel cause with the same enthusiasm that he brought to opposing the American side in Vietnam in the 1960's; still, it is difficult to determine where Jacobinism left off and opportunism began. In any case, by November 1967 de Gaulle was bluntly expounding the leftist interpretation of these conflicts and of the American role in these two areas of the world. The Left could only admire the General who took on the American "imperialists" singlehandedly.

The preempting of the Left in foreign policy in no way interfered with de Gaulle's plans to act upon his own, more properly rightist world view. While he was able to obtain favor with the Left for associating himself with the Arab "liberation" cause, he was simultaneously attempting to outbid America in the quest for a leadership role in the Third World. This effort was closely linked to de Gaulle's famous belief in France's long-term cultural mission in the world. It is, indeed, the vision of France as a "Third Force" (as between and apart from the United States and the Soviet Union), and as a third cultural alternative, which constitutes the essential legacy of de Gaulle's world view. Today the European community appears ready to join in France's fomerly solo performance, further strengthening the "Gaullism" of a non-Gaullist, centrist President. (The General is one of the few deceased world leaders who rests comfortably in his grave.)

In 1967 the Third Force appeared even closer to the second than it does today. Fearing that the humiliation of the Arabs and their Russian suppliers could actually lead to all-out nuclear war, de Gaulle turned his assumed role into that of devil's advocate for the Russians and apologist for the Arabs. Yet while he wanted France to have a voice (one practically in unison with that of the Arabs and Russians) in the formulation of a peace settlement, he did not appear willing to commit France to insuring peace financially or militarily.

In the Gaullist scheme, the U.S. was to be responsible for extracting the necessary concessions from Israel; it was not made clear what pressures, if any, would be brought to bear on the Arab side. The French revealed here that they were not well-informed on the nature of U.S.-Israel relations. They persisted in believing that the U.S. could coerce Israel into concessions that nation judged contrary to its security. But Israel has never been America's puppet; America, never Israel's uncon-

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ditional supporter. In similar circumstances de Gaulle himself would have no doubt refused to be pressured: such methods are wholly inconsistent with his own principle of national sovereignty, not to mention the democratic political principles of the free world generally.

Today the French Left has fallen into a certain disarray. At the same time there has been a resurgence of the Right which has given rise to an atmosphere conducive to violent manifestations of both xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Thus the confusion of the Left is unlikely to result in a more sympathetic attitude toward French Jews or toward Israel. A glance at French history from the Middle Ages to the present suggests that where the Jews are concerned many Frenchmen will consciously or unconsciously blame the victims for their suffering and for the disruption of the social and political environment that their suffering occasions. It was Prime Minister Barre himself who said, in a statement meant to condemn the attack on the synagogue on rue Copernic last fall, that it "was intended for the Jews attending the synagogue and struck *innocent French people* who were crossing rue Copernic" (emphasis added). A recent poll revealed that 10 percent of the French people believe that French Jews are less French than others, and 55 percent believe that anti-Semitism is "rather widespread" in France.

FINALLY there is the economic issue, which was brought clearly to the fore by the Yom Kippur War and the resultant Arab oil challenge. In 1973 France was very heavily dependent on imported oil; 53 percent came from Arab states, and almost a third of this from the most militant, i.e., Algeria, Libya, and Iraq. Today France is striving for greater energy independence vis-à-vis the Arab nations, and has undertaken a vigorous nuclear-development program with a high degree of public support, but even the most optimistic planners foresee no less than a 60-percent dependency on foreign oil in the future.

In export trade, France in the early 70's was as dependent on the Arab nations combined (5 percent) as on the U.S.; by 1978 the trade dependence had increased to 9 percent for both. In spite of this equivalence, the Arab market is, for obvious reasons, more desirable than that of the U.S. In addition, France has increasingly absorbed many of the unskilled workers from North Africa, particularly from Algeria, while that country has absorbed in turn many of the surplus skilled and educated French. Of all the industrialized nations, France has been one of the most vulnerable to Arab economic-diplomatic pressure.

In addition to the general problem of sustaining an expanding economy based on oil, there is the particular one of sustaining the arms industry which is so crucial to France's policy of independence. In order to develop and produce what France needs in sophisticated conventional weaponry, a broadly based industry employing 275,000 workers is required; the industry thus created produces more than France needs or can absorb. It must, therefore, export 75 percent of what it produces. Arms alone constitute 25 percent of its heavy exports, and in the recent decade many of those arms have gone to anti-Israel Arab nations. Ironically, one of the greatest attractions of French arms for the Arabs is the fact that over the years they have been successfully tested (by Israel) in war.

To resolve the contradiction between the need to sell arms and the official policy of neutrality, Pompidou developed a policy which he hoped would promote rather than discourage the peaceful coexistence of independent, nonaligned nations. The main points of this policy, still in force, are that France does not attach political strings to arms deals; that the arms are not to be used in any operation forbidden by the UN Charter; that the arms are not to be used in civil strife; and that reexportation is forbidden. An embargo on delivery and future sales is the principal means by which France would enforce such stipulations. Pompidou's theory justifies selling arms to many Arab countries on the grounds that France is thereby preempting and offsetting the Russian arms build-up in the area. Again, the theory has not worked out well in practice.

While de Gaulle placed other imperatives ahead of the economic one, he was already well aware of the economic incentive to sever the Franco-Israeli connection. Pompidou was more candid about it. Though actually embarrassed by some aspects of de Gaulle's policy toward Israel, and even amenable to lifting the embargo against Israel before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, Pompidou ultimately reordered French priorities once and for all to the detriment of relations with Israel. Sentiment for Israel was sacrificed in order to avoid weakening France's already precarious economic situation. Giscard did finally lift the embargo in 1974—after Israel had totally reoriented its defense system away from French arms. France still sells relatively little to Israel.

In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War and the oil embargo, Pompidou adopted an approach to the Arab challenge which differed greatly from that of his European and American colleagues. Like Giscard after him, he tried to promote dialogue between consumers, and producers, in direct opposition to the Kissinger-inspired plan to confront the producers with a united bloc of consumers. Resorting to a "Lone Ranger" role with OPEC nations, France has since drawn up bilateral contracts and multiplied its oil imports fourfold.

In his own pursuit of this same policy, Giscard has made a special effort to broaden and diversify

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economic ties with OPEC countries. But since it is difficult for France to offer commercial deals as attractive as those of the Germans, Japanese, and Americans, it must attempt to compensate the Arabs politically for what it cannot bring them economically. Certainly the French position on Palestinian self-determination could only please the leaders of the Persian Gulf countries which Giscard visited last spring; over half of their labor forces are Palestinian. It is still too soon to determine the overall effectiveness of this political packaging, but the harvest of contracts has already begun to come in; last October, Saudi Arabia made a $3.5-billion purchase of naval equipment from France.

How effective have the twin weapons of oil (in the hands of the Arabs) and arms (in the hands of the French) been in promoting peace in the Middle East? They have not been effective because they have both been aimed at only one party to the conflict, thus further destabilizing the situation. The Arab oil embargo has at certain economic junctures had a persuasive impact on its victims' behavior, as shown in the 1973 "Declaration of the Nine" in which the European nations, shortly after the Yom Kippur War, went much farther than UN Resolution 242 in recognizing the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people"; the contribution such actions have made to the cause of peace is arguable, to say the least. As for the arms embargo, while it has indeed worked against Israel at times, it too has done nothing to promote disarmament or peace in the area. The restrictive covenants introduced under Pompidou did not, for example, prevent Libya from lending Mirage jets to Egypt in the Yom Kippur War. Today it is a buyer's market in arms; without real international cooperation, embargoes will always have the boomerang effect of stimulating acquisition.

All in all, France's pressing domestic economic problems, coupled with a persistent faith in détente, have made the prospects of restoring friendship with Israel less likely than ever. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan did little to deflect France from its present course in world affairs, and there is good reason to doubt that even an invasion of Poland would alter its determination to seduce the Soviet bear. Any realistic assessment of how France perceives its immediate national interest, revolving as it does around economic issues and a long-standing "cultural" sympathy with Arab countries, suggests that relations will remain cool and distant for a long time to come.

That France should look to its national interest is not in question here. What is in question is the credibility of France's claim to be a promoter of peace. Placed in greater historical perspective, the past thirty years may one day look very different to the two countries of France and Israel. What for Israel will have been a painful weaning from a military and political "mother" will for France have been perhaps only the awkward ending of a marriage of convenience whose primary purpose was to promote French cultural precedence and economic ties in the Mediterranean Muslim world.

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Having Babies Again

Naomi Munson

SUDDENLY, having babies is back in fashion. In the red hot center of social enlightenment, where I live and work, the signs of a new trend are unmistakable.

On New York's Upper East Side, headwaters of fashion for fashionably enlightened people everywhere—and a virtual desert of sterility since the assault of the women's movement against motherhood began taking hold a decade ago—baby carriages are becoming as common as Peugeot racing bikes, and the infant carrier is worn with as much panache as the downfilled coat. On the beaches of East Hampton, summer playground of the social trendsetters, the maternity bathing suit is fast overtaking the maillot as the swimwear of preference, and those little plastic baggies in the beachbags are more often filled with zwieback than with marijuana. In Madison Avenue office corridors, the names of obstetricians are traded more avidly than names of analysts, and methods of natural childbirth are of greater interest than methods of contraception.

Unquestionably in the vanguard of this fashion are the fading feminists who, having decreed at the height of their fertility that childrearing was at best a matter of indifference, at worst another link in the chain of oppression, are fast approaching the age when the danger of spawning "defective" offspring becomes prohibitively high; or, indeed, when the chances of spawning anything at all begin to diminish significantly.

These aging sophisticates can hardly be expected, however, to endure the experience of pregnancy and motherhood without applying to it their own special revolutionary magic. As they did with sex and with marriage, in fact, they are creating a new kind of pregnancy and a new style of motherhood to go along with it.

I work in an office filled with such women. It is a place where every nuance of current cultural fashion quickly becomes orthodoxy—particularly where women and their "rights" are concerned. It is also a place where the work is interesting and, for the most part, intellectually demanding. Not surprisingly, it is full of ambitious and gifted career women. Ten years ago, the office women's committee threatened a class-action suit and wrung from management an agreement to redress past injustices in hiring and promotion. In the past decade, women have moved rapidly up the ladder to positions of respect and importance. The company today is "committed" to sustaining that progress. There is, to be sure, the occasional flurry over "sexist" lapses, but by now most of the men these women deal with every day have been properly conditioned. Their bosses would sooner go thirsty than ask them for a cup of coffee; their husbands would no more expect dinner on the table every night than efficiency from the federal bureaucracy.

Thus, their lives seem to be the realization of every young girl's dreams. These ladies of liberty, my office mates, have had their share of cocaine and caviar; they've shot the rapids in a canoe and roller-boogied till 5 A.M.; they've done the Caribbean and the Aegean; they've kept clean for Gene and dressed for success; they've tried the new sexuality and the new celibacy.

Now they are "into" pregnancy. This year alone, they will have as many babies as they have had in the past six years taken together. And as with everything else, they're doing it in style. Having made the decision to become mothers, they are determined to see the process through in a rational and intelligent manner—unlike their own mothers who plunged unthinkingly into the procreative cycle. And they are also determined that pregnancy and motherhood will not interfere with whatever else they have chosen to do with their lives.

THE new pregnancy begins in earnest with amniocentesis. This procedure, which is performed in the fourth or fifth month after conception, involves the insertion of a tube into the womb to withdraw a portion of the amniotic fluid for analysis. The analysis reveals the sex of the child; it can also, however, detect any number of genetic flaws. Then, if the fetus is found to have a debilitating defect, it is aborted, thus saving the parents—and society—the agony and expense of supporting what has come to be seen by all right-thinking people as a life "not worth living." Of course, not even amniocentesis can predict blindness or a malfunctioning heart valve, but proponents of genetic screening have hope for the future.

It is natural to the logic of this reliance on amniocentesis to look forward to the time when it can provide even more precise information about the condition of the fetus, and at an earlier date. (An abortion in the first or second month is so much less fuss.) At the moment, because of an aversion to second-trimester abortion, amniocentesis is medically recommended primarily for women over thirty-five who are at greater risk than their younger sisters of producing deficient children. It is safe to say, however, that as the new fashion of pregnancy takes hold,

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younger women will turn to amniocentesis as eagerly as their elders. For it is of the essence of this new style that there should be no need for *anyone* to bear or raise a less than perfect baby.

Once the pregnancy is firmly established, it is considered imperative that the new mother get into a really good natural-childbirth class. These classes provide special training to lessen pain, and thus to eliminate the need for anesthesia during birth. Such training also permits the parents a more direct role in the delivery, while diminishing the function of the doctor. Natural childbirth itself is hardly an innovation; women have been having babies without anesthesia for thousands of years. Unlike their benighted foresisters, however, modern mothers do not simply lie back and take the pain. They apply the principle that has come to their aid so often in their lives: when in difficulty, go back to school.

There are several different schools and theories of natural childbirth, but the method of the moment is Lamaze. At Lamaze school, the mother-to-be and a "coach," preferably her husband, study together for several months, learning breathing and relaxation exercises that purportedly alleviate the pain of labor. The Le Boyer method adds dim lights and calm silence in the delivery room, and a dunking in warm water for the baby shortly after birth, presumably so that he need never know he has left the safety of the womb. Though Lamaze is concerned more with soothing the mother than with welcoming the baby, any "prepared" delivery is considered equally advantageous to both. As one new mother of my acquaintance put it, "The less pain you feel, the less you resent the baby."

The resentment a mother feels for her newborn infant must be as nothing, however, compared with her anger at the man who has inflicted this pain on her. The new fashion deals with this possibility by including the father as an equal partner throughout the pregnancy. He reads—and enjoys—along with his wife, books on prenatal development and post-natal care. He takes an interest in all the natural mysteries of birth. He dutifully attends classes and practices his coaching techniques at home. Pregnancy and birth thus become a joint "human" venture. Prepared childbirth also helps reduce a woman's rage against her husband by allowing him to participate, if only indirectly, in the labor itself. One woman I know was so determined to avoid resenting her husband that she insisted he remain with her throughout the delivery, though he fainted several times.

So LIBERATED men, only too conscious of the consequences of recalcitrance where their wives are concerned, are flocking to delivery rooms. It would, however, be unfair to imply that appeasement is their only motivation. These men are well aware that the responsibilities of what they call "parenting" begin before birth. And they appear to be taking those responsibilities very seriously. At a recent party attended by several expecting couples, for example, the cocktail chatter was all of babies. The women sat in one corner mulling over the economic difficulties of childrearing; their husbands, gathered nearby, were earnestly discussing the relative merits of Lamaze and Le Boyer, and the possibility that a Caesarian might prove necessary.

Fathers who have gone through the "birth experience" are quick to point out that it is as much a pleasure as a duty. One glows with the delight of having been the first to hold the baby, all unwashed from the travails of birth. Another describes his pride in protecting his newborn son from the overeager ministrations of the medical staff. Yet a third sums up the spirit of the whole endeavor, explaining that "if I weren't in the delivery room, my wife would have to take the pictures herself."

The pleasures of the delivery room do not, apparently, extend full-blown into the nursery. The new father will, of course, do his fair share of the diapering and powdering, as he does with the rest of the household chores. He would also participate in the 2 A.M. feedings if, along with amniocentesis and childbirth classes, breast feeding were not also the thing nowadays. Still, not even the most devoted father generally expresses a yearning for full-time "parenting." And the mother, much as she has enjoyed giving birth, has her own "needs" to consider. The whole family is agreed that to allow the child to disrupt its mother's life would serve only to enhance any resentment left over from the delivery.

The next step under the new dispensation, then, is to look into day care. There is the private babysitter, but that can be expensive; a sitter is also likely to need an occasional day off, forcing the mother to miss work and care for the child on her own. A group day-care situation is generally found to be far more reliable and more economical. It offers, in addition, opportunities that —as any mother of a two-year-old in a day-care center will attest—not even maternal supervision can provide. A group-care child, it seems, is a "socialized" child. A baby thrown in among other babies at an early age has the jump on interpersonal relationships. The only question remaining is at how early an age the socialization process should commence. Some children begin at two months, others at six months or a year. But the general consensus is that two years is the longest any child should be left to languish within the anti-social confines of his own home.

THE truth, in other words, is that while *having* babies is very much the thing, taking the time and expending the energy to raise them properly is still definitely déclassé. These babies are conceived, paradoxically enough, with no thought for the future. Their conception is merely the next step—perhaps the Ultimate Experience—in their mothers' quest for "fulfillment." It seems not to occur to their parents that after the amnio is done, after the classes are over, after the movies of the delivery have been developed, there will have been brought into the world a new and helpless human being, in need of consistent and ungrudging attention. Faced with this reality, the new-style mothers and fathers appear to be fleeing from it as if from the plague.

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The flight itself seems to generate in the new mothers an emotion hitherto quite unfamiliar to them: guilt. Having spent their adulthood considering little beyond their own happiness and status, such women have been largely strangers to this peculiar psychological condition. They feel no guilt, for example, toward their own mothers, whose devotion to home and family they tend to disparage as mere enslavement; they feel none toward their fathers, whose fond indulgence they decry as disguised contempt; they feel none toward their husbands, whose diligent support they revile as oppression.

But their behavior toward their babies, they seem to feel, warrants some special justification. Indeed, they are to be heard, daily, saying defensively that the arrangements they have made for child-care are *not* merely expediencies. It is, they aver, actually healthier for a child to be separated from his mother and sent out into the world—and in any case, it is not the quantity but the *quality* of the time mother and child spend together that is important. Furthermore, they insist, a frustrated and unfulfilled mother is not fit company for a child.

The mystery of this skillful defense is that it has no visible target. Friends and relatives, who might once have voiced a gentle reproach, have long since been cowed into silence. Pundits and politicos, who might once have stood in public opposition, have grown wary.

The struggle here is clearly internal. It is themselves they seek so insistently to convince of the purity of their motives, the righteousness of their actions, while all their instincts tell them they are doing something wrong. Although they are past masters at the art of self-deception, moreover, in this situation they are at a distinct disadvantage, for every day they face the world's most intransigently straightforward creatures.

Babies, after all, know nothing of "supportiveness"; they care nothing for "self-fulfillment." They want what they want when they want it, and generally what they want is their mothers. Denied this fundamental requirement, they do not react in a civilized manner. They often display a strong desire to hit, kick, and bite their fellow man, and they sometimes express a preference in the middle of the night for their parents' company over their own solitary crib.

A certain diffidence, born of guilt, inhibits these new mothers from dealing with such behavior. They are overwhelmed by it, and are unable to discipline their children in the most basic ways. They will not forbid them to attack others physically; they cannot insist that they remain in their own beds at night. They manage to find any number of psychological and developmental excuses for naughtiness. But what they communicate is a sense of helplessness, as well as a kind of glum resignation, that bespeaks an awareness of their own dereliction.

For all their protestations to the contrary, these mothers know full well that the defenseless creatures they have borne need not a friendly shove out of the house but a safe haven from what seems to them a chaotic and unmanageable world. They know, too, that only they can really provide that haven. But since they are in the habit of leading their lives without regard for the feelings of others, and since many of them also staunchly believe, along with the feminist "revolution," that the womanly instinct for comforting and cosseting the young is a conspiratorial myth, they fight or deny their motherly impulses, they rationalize the arrangements they make to have others care for their children, and they explain away the behavior problems that result. The guilt they feel is the tribute emotion pays to their failure.

BUT what of the younger generation of "liberated" women? They, now in their mid- to late twenties, are the chief beneficiaries of the past decade's struggle for "equality." Several years out of college, they already have responsible and demanding jobs, and they look forward with confidence to the day—not so far in the future—when their achievements will be even more highly rewarded. Not only the ten-year age gap, however, separates them from their battle-worn comrades of whom I have written above. These younger women take their careers—and their success—so much for granted that for them the feminist cause is by now merely a matter of course.

Now that pregnancy is not just permissible but fashionable, they will no doubt want to get in on the action. They, too, will exchange their squash racquets for knitting needles, their Perrier water for a daily quart of milk. They will have their amnio, do their breathing, and get their cameras ready.

As with their elders, however, at some point the realization is bound to dawn that the object of the exercise is a baby, hitherto regarded as neither particularly necessary nor particularly desirable. The rehabilitation of the baby going on all around them is clearly having an unsettling effect on these girls, who had accepted in complete faith the dictum that motherhood is no more than a subtle weapon in the chauvinist arsenal.

It confirms, first of all, a feeling, which they have entertained for some time, that the world of work is not quite what it has been cracked up to be. Raised on the idea that this world is their proper place, they are discovering its joys to be far fewer than its pains. It is a world filled with anxiety, resentment, and tedium. Even the president of the company, they are dismayed to learn, may be burdened with distasteful and uninteresting chores.

Dissatisfaction is the common condition of the young women I work with, and, I venture to say, of their counterparts everywhere. Nothing seems to dispel it: not raises, not promotions, not even unceasing praise. What's more, they are subject to bouts of loneliness and unaccountable depressions. Their professional life seems to be one endless anticipation of the next step up the ladder, which, when it comes, never quite measures up to expectations. Their personal life seems to consist of an endless succession of liaisons with unsuitable, unloving, and unsatisfactory young men. They have not found happiness and they do not know why.

The sudden outbreak of fecund-

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ity among their most successful and most committed elders raises the nagging suspicion that *they* have not found happiness either, that they, too, feel the lack of something. Having recognized this element in the new pregnancy, younger women may also recognize that the new fashion of carrying, birthing, and raising a baby has failed to fill the void. The view of motherhood not as an alternative but simply as another attainment, like a promotion or a larger office, is satisfactory to neither mother nor child. If the young, thus, learn from their elders to *have* children, they might also learn from observing them that this is not the way to do it.

The altogether subversive notion now enters the picture that perhaps the ultimate satisfaction is not to be found in the office at all, that the yearning to bear and mother a child is a healthy urge, to be responded to without shame or apology.

Can the counterrevolution then be far behind?

"... Who Made Me a Woman"

George Jochnowitz

"BLESSED art Thou, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who did not make me a woman." Jewish men have recited this blessing for centuries. Jews are not the only people who have said blessings of this type. Socrates, or perhaps Thales, we are told by Diogenes Laertius in his *Life of Thales*, may have repeated three blessings for which he was grateful to fortune: "First, that I was born a human being and not one of the brutes; next, that I was born a man and not a woman; thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian."

Jewish women, at the same point in the morning prayers, bless God "who made me according to His will." In our own time, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform Judaism have changed or eliminated these blessings (although they remain in the Conservative weekday morning service), but Orthodox prayerbooks maintain them as they have always been.

Always? No. There is at least one exception: Roth Manuscript 32, a 14th- or 15th-century translation of the daily prayers into Shuadit, which was the language of the Jews of southern France until the early 19th century. Shuadit is also called Judeo-Provençal and was very similar to the local language spoken by non-Jews in the south of France. The prayerbook was written in the Hebrew alphabet. Here, in my own transcription into Latin characters, are three blessings from the Morning Benedictions (*Birkhot ha-Shaḥar*):

Benedich Tu Sant Benezet nostre Diew rey dal segle ke non fis mi serventa.

Benedich Tu Sant Benezet nostre Diew rey dal segle ke non fis mi goya.

Benedich Tu Sant Benezet nostre Diew rey dal segle ke fis mi fena.

The English translation is as follows: Blessed art Thou Lord our God king of eternity who did not make me a slave (feminine). Blessed art Thou . . . who did not make me a Gentile (feminine). Blessed art Thou . . . who made me a woman.

The book that contains these blessings is one of many examples of a Renaissance translation of the prayerbook into the vernacular. The vernacular could be any language at all, but the alphabet had to be Hebrew. The Jews of southern France have left us very few documents in their language. To my knowledge, only one copy of the Shuadit translation of the prayerbook exists in the world. It is found in the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds, England, and was donated by Cecil Roth. The title page bears the Hebrew words *aḥoti at hayiy le-alfey revavah*, "my sister, be the mother of thousands of ten thousands," based on the blessing to Rebecca in Genesis 24:60 and suggesting that the translation was a wedding gift to a sister. The book, at least for a time, belonged to a family named Montel, which is the Provençal equivalent of the French-Jewish surname Monteux.

Many translations of the prayerbook were explicitly made for women. Men, ideally, could read and understand the service in Hebrew. Jewish women were also expected to read. They had to learn Hebrew in order to say their prayers. But they did not always know enough Hebrew to understand what they were saying, and so translations were written for them.

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Any woman who knew Hebrew letters could sound out the words of her own native language. I rather suspect that a good many men also needed and made use of these vernacular prayerbooks. Italy in particular is a place that has given us prayerbooks of this type. There are handwritten copies dating from the 14th and 15th centuries, and printed versions, which went into several editions, dating from the 16th. Copies may be found in the British Museum, the Special Collections Library of Columbia University, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and other libraries in various countries. The existence of so many translations of religious texts made for women in the Renaissance shows that Jewish women could read during an era of widespread illiteracy.

My interest in Roth Manuscript 32 is linguistic and not liturgical. But when I came across the words, "who made me a woman," I was very surprised. I looked at the Liturgy Collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary to see if there were parallels in other prayerbooks. I found none, although I came across one work (MIC 4266) dating from 1776 where the scribe was a woman, Esther bat Joseph Rovigo. In a Judeo-Italian prayerbook for women (MIC 4076) there was only the familiar "who made me according to His will," which in 15th-century Judeo-Italian was *"che fece mi come la volentade Soa."*

Anyone who knows Italian will be startled by the bizarre word order, *che fece mi* instead of *che mi fece* and *la volentade Soa* instead of *la Sua volontà*. Similar peculiarities are found in the Shuadit examples cited above. That is because medieval and Renaissance translations were done word for word. Hebrew word order was followed slavishly even if the result was ungrammatical or meaningless. Thus we have "king of eternity" instead of "king of the universe" in the Shuadit blessings above. The Hebrew *'olam* can mean either "eternity" or "universe," depending on the context. Medieval translators, however, paid no attention to context. Each word had one and only one translation, whether it made sense or not.

If our translation was super-literal and word for word, how can it say "who made me a woman"? Is there a Hebrew original? Perhaps, but I have never seen one or heard of one. There is no reference to such a blessing in Ismar Elbogen's *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* ("Jewish Liturgy in Its Historical Development"), or in Joseph Heinemann's expanded notes to Elbogen. Asher of Lunel (in southern France) apparently never referred to a special women's blessing according to the discussion in Saul Lieberman's *Tosefta Kifshutah*. A recent article in *Sinai* (1979) by Naphtali Wieder on the blessings "Gentile, slave, woman" does not mention anything concerning a unique women's variant.

But I am not the first scholar in recent years to have looked at Roth Manuscript 32. Moshé Lazar published an article in *Mélanges offerts à Jean Frappier* in which he discusses this manuscript, transcribes part of it into Latin letters, and translates the transcribed sections into French. In Lazar's article we read, *". . . qui m'a faite femme."* Yet Lazar does not comment on the uniqueness of this passage; his article is about the language of the text but not its content. Unfortunately, scholars of liturgy, who would be very interested in a previously unattested variant of the Morning Benedictions, do not ordinarily read about Romance philology, and so it is doubtful that they are aware of Lazar's article. Perhaps certain scholarly discoveries belong in magazines of general interest as well as in learned journals.

ALTHOUGH the Morning Benedictions are generally taken from Talmud Berakhot 60b, the women's blessing, "who made me according to His will," may not be very much older than our Shuadit translation. Israel Abrahams, in *A Companion to the Authorized Prayerbook*, says that it was attested in the first part of the 14th century. Conceivably there were competing variants in the Middle Ages, only one of which has survived to our own time. The Shuadit version, unfortunately, did not make it.

"Blessed art Thou . . . who made me according to His will" would be an egalitarian blessing if it were said by both men and women. It is considered evidence of an inferior religious status for women because it does not balance the corresponding men's benediction. For that matter, neither does the positively phrased "who made me a woman," but it reflects greater pride and seems to suggest a view of the religious role of women as equivalent to that of men. Why then do we have no other evidence of its existence?

Can it be that it was written once and only once, in a work commissioned by an important man who wanted an especially nice blessing for his sister to be included in the book he gave her as a gift? If that were the explanation, our prayerbook would be unique in history and could tell us nothing about the possibility of an alternative tradition of women's blessings in the Morning Benedictions. It would also mean that Jews in the 14th or 15th century felt free to alter the prayers as they wished, a possibility that is very unlikely indeed, especially in view of the extreme literalness of our translation.

Was there a degree of equality for Jewish women in the Middle Ages and Renaissance that has vanished from the liturgy? There is no evidence. All we have is the fact of a single blessing in a translated prayerbook from southern France. Conjecture is valuable and pleasurable, but there is nothing so beautiful as a fact.

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Napoleon Conquers America

Richard Grenier

DURING the royalist rising of the 13 Vendémiaire an obscure young officer of the Republic named Buonaparte turned his trained artillery on a Paris mob and cut it to pieces. The greatest mistake a military commander could make facing the "populace," he later explained, was to fire blank ammunition; it inspired only insolence and contempt. From the first round, he said, troops facing a mob should shoot to kill. Ten days later he was made a major general. Scarcely a week after that—his skill and ruthless determination to serve the Republic proven on the 13 Vendémiaire—he was given command of France's Army of the Interior.

One may doubt that a Bonaparte at Kent State in 1970 would have been so lionized or rewarded. But now Bonaparte has stormed and conquered New York's Radio City Music Hall, as well as the American press in its entirety. At least the 1927 silent film epic *Napoleon* by France's Abel Gance has done so. And what makes the event so bizarre is that the celebrity-studded crowds that roared, cheered, and gave the film delirious standing ovations were apparently made up of the sort of people who felt the killing of four students at Kent State would live in the annals of American villainy.

Were the crowds cheering, not Bonaparte, but the art of Abel Gance? To a degree, perhaps—particularly misled as they were by balderdash in the press about this being a "lost" masterpiece. (Gance's *Napoleon* was about as lost as D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation.*) But would feverish throngs like this have turned out for a fuller version of Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*, or the original five-hour version of Erich von Stroheim's *Greed*, or even Eisenstein's (genuinely) lost and rediscovered first film *Strike*? A spokesman for Radio City Music Hall gave the game away with an incredulous, "Film buffs? You think there are fifty thousand film buffs in New York?" At a ticket price scaled to $25? There can be no question: these crowds were cheering to a large extent for Napoleon himself—at least for the Napoleon presented to them in Gance's film.

And Gance's Napoleon is not just any old figure in the heroic mold. He is no Sitting Bull, no John Henry, no Ivan the Terrible, no Lenin. Gance gives us Napoleon as Hero of Western Civilization, pure, almost sacramentalized, his eyes dreamy with the vision of his destiny, of his mission to bring France's gift of liberty to the world (if necessary by cannon and saber). The film is a work of fervid patriotism, even gutter patriotism. And it opened at Radio City Music Hall during the frenzied weekend when the American hostages from Teheran arrived back in New York. I am normally extremely cautious about attempting to read the minds of people sitting with me in a darkened theater, but the 6,000 at the Music Hall were in such a state of vociferous exaltation that one had only to listen to what they cheered for. Patriotism, it would seem on the face of it, is back in style. And not only patriotism but liberty—old-fashioned liberty—and perhaps even the notion that liberty is worth fighting for, as in that quaint archaism, "Give me liberty or give me death." At least the question is posed, all by an ecstatic public response to what is in many ways a very trashy movie.

The critical reception for this fifty-four-year-old silent film has been as astonishing as the audience response. Vincent Canby of the New York *Times* wrote: "One realizes that there once was a film that justified all of the adjectives that have subsequently been debased. *Napoleon* sweeps, it takes the breath away, it dazzles." He concluded—in January—that it seemed certain to be the film event of the year. Jack Kroll of *Newsweek* went him one better, calling it the most thrilling film in *many* years, "an explosion of creativity by a man on fire." Another leading critic wrote: "For once the word 'masterpiece' seems too puny"; another, "The major movie experience of my lifetime."

The rapture was virtually universal. Originally scheduled for only two performances, the film was extended for three more the weekend following, and then the weekend after that, in response to what a critic called "a ticket demand unparalleled in modern cinema." Aided by the high ticket price, the film broke the Music Hall's box-office records for a single showing, for a day, and even for a week—on the basis of three showings—and tickets were scalped on the street for $40. NBC devoted a segment of its network Nightly News to the phenomenon. Although it played in only a single house in the whole country, and for only three performances, trade publications ranked the movie eleventh for the week nationwide. Special showings of *Napoleon* are now being considered for the Hollywood Bowl, for the restored 4,000-seat Fox in Atlanta, and for Japan, after which it will go on general release throughout the U.S. with its musical score recorded on a soundtrack. It was as if someone had lit a match, and a gasoline-filled room had burst into flames.

The man who lit the match, of course, was Francis Coppola—that twelfth-hour convert to the anti-Vietnam war movement. I have already expressed in these pages* my doubts of Coppola's bona fides

RICHARD GRENIER's *most recent article on the movies, "The Aging of the New Wave," appeared in our February issue.*

* "Coppola's Folly," October 1979.

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as a pacifist or anti-bellicist of any sort, and shall merely add that his new avocation as patron of neglected or "forgotten" film masterpieces appears to support my view. Of all the neglected masterpieces, the three he has discovered so far have been Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Our Hitler*, Gance's *Napoleon*, and, soon to be presented, Leni Riefenstahl's *The Triumph of the Will*—which is to say, two films about Hitler and one about Napoleon. The list would seem to speak for itself.

But Coppola has great talents as a showman, the heart of a Mike Todd, a plunger. Already on the verge of bankruptcy again, the profits from his commercially successful *Apocalypse Now* gaspingly overcommitted, he knew *Napoleon* would have to be an "event" or nothing. He invested a quarter of a million dollars in the project, which included a scholarly reconstitution of something close to the original film and a stirring eclectic score composed by his father, Carmine Coppola, performed on stage by the sixty-piece American Symphony Orchestra. The predestined locale, with an overhead cost per performance of $60,000, was the Radio City Music Hall. ("Right where Napoleon belongs," said a friend of mine with a sense of the appropriate. "Right in there with those Rockettes.")

THERE is no question but what Gance's *Napoleon* deserves a place in film history. Its technical innovations alone earn it that. In 1927, when the film was released, the Germans had already put the camera on wheels, inventing the so-called "tracking shot," and Russia's Sergei Eisenstein, in his *Battleship Potemkin*, in addition to setting up colossal scenes and composing screen images of unprecedented power, had carried the art of "montage"—in his view the heart of the cinema, the control of stress and timing without which all else is nothing—to a level of achievement perhaps still to be surpassed.

Most of Gance's innovations were in the realm of camera movement. He suspended his camera from overhead wires like a miniature cable car. He strapped it to the back of a galloping horse. In what was perhaps the most sensational shot of his career, he fastened his camera to a gigantic swing which sweeps through the air above the revolutionary Convention, conveying the wild, heady turbulence of the Revolution, and at the same time suggesting the mighty waves of a tempest at sea, for crossing the Mediterranean in a storm-tossed ship from Corsica is the young Napoleon—France's Man of Destiny.

To my knowledge, Gance was also the first to use the hand-held camera. I once saw at the Paris Cinémathèque a shot not in the present version in which this same tempestuous Convention is also shown from the point of view of the orator, the legendary Danton. The image of the assembly hall teeming with delegates is seen to rise and fall, no longer with the circular swell of the ocean's waves but with the anthropomorphic heaving of a man's chest. From the floor of the Convention we have already seen the great Danton holding forth in impassioned speech. Now we see this same Convention from the heaving chest of the man who for a time held the Revolution in sway. Abel Gance, in short, invented the subjective camera.

The technical novelty for which he is most famous, however, is what he called "Polyvision," a kind of proto-Cinerama. For four sequences of the film—only one of which has been preserved—Gance goes to three cameras, expanding the pageant-like spectacle of Napoleon's army on the march to the lateral limits of visual perception. Gance was very attached to his Polyvision, and wretchedly cast down when it failed to catch on. One thing that sets it apart from Cinerama is that Polyvision, although sometimes using its three screens simply to widen a single image as in the familiar Cinerama technique, often splits into three separate pictures—two angles of the army on the march on side screens, in one case, while on the central screen flaps the imperial eagle, symbol of Napoleon's destiny. Gance was at great pains to explain that in Polyvision some of the images merely tell the film's story, they are its "prose," while the other images, laden with symbols and memory projections, are its "poetry" and Polyvision's true glory. A flapping cardboard eagle as symbol of Napoleon's destiny might not seem a very high form of poetry, but it is typical enough of Abel Gance.

THE drive behind these technical innovations can only be understood if it is remembered—as it rarely is—that in its early days the cinema had a raging inferiority complex with respect to the legitimate theater. The cinema had no intellectual prestige. Actors who worked for it were often looked down on. (There are people still alive today who remember signs on the old Hollywood boarding houses, "No Dogs or Actors.")

In recent decades, with the theater very much on the defensive with respect to the cinema, stage actors have been known to come gamboling down the aisle to argue with members of the audience or sit on their laps—all in a desperate attempt to "do things the movies can't." But in the 20's, when the shoe was definitely on the other foot, it was the film-makers who desperately wanted to do things the *stage* could not. And they did so with a vengence. Eyes mesmerized by the field of vision of the magical moving camera, film audiences sailed through storms at sea, flew through the air. Griffith had already measured the dramatic impact of the closeup, but it was now put to more intensive use. The camera could see small. It could see big. Audiences could see crowds storm the real Winter Palace in Petrograd (Eisenstein's *October*), could cross the real Alps with Hannibal.

I disagree with Kevin Brownlow, the British film historian who has made something of a life work of reconstituting the original *Napoleon*, when he says that the advent of the talking picture "consigned the innovations of *Napoleon* to the scrap heap." True, most film historians consider the early "talkies" an artistic step backward. Exploration of the full visual possibilities of the medium was temporarily abandoned, spoken dialogue allowing film-makers to ape what they considered their artistic and social betters of the stage, turning the movies into a kind of filmed theater,

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stage entertainment for the multitudes—a development anathematized by Eisenstein, to name only one. But before long the pressure to expand the medium was on again: *The Blue Angel, Le Jour se Lève, Citizen Kane.*

Needless to say, when the cinema was once more on the defensive—this time with respect not to a "higher" art medium but to a lower, television—every single one of Gance's techniques without exception was brought out again, some of them to become, if they had not already, part of the permanent vocabulary of film language. To this day every director who aligns his camera with the barrel and sights of an assassin's rifle, or sets it on the handlebars of a roaring motorcycle, or on the skids of a helicopter to glide and swoop over city or mountain, has as his spiritual ancestor Abel Gance. I myself do not believe that the actors who broke out of the proscenium arch to sit in the laps of the audience raised the theater to any new heights. But the film-makers who worked feverishly finding new techniques to enrich their means of expression developed a medium of vast range and flexibility and emotional power and, in my view, created a major new art. So, yes, anyone with a true scholar's interest in the development of cinema technique should see Abel Gance's *Napoleon*. Unfortunately, he will also have to put up with a lot of junk.

NAPOLEON was made for a 1927 Frenchman with about a fourth-grade education. It is interlarded with tatty little fictions, and the central character himself is fictionalized at many key points—always in the direction of hagiography. As history the film lies somewhere between Parson Weems's George Washington with his cherry tree ("I cannot tell a lie") and D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, in which the cause of the Civil War is shown to be Abraham Lincoln's having a mulatto mistress.

If anything, *Napoleon* is closer to Griffith than to Weems. The 13 Vendémiaire, for example, is not plainly represented as a royalist rising, which it was, with Frenchman killing Frenchman, but as an "invasion"—presumably by foreigners of some sort. Whether or not Gance ever shot Bonaparte's actual encounter with the "invaders" I do not know, and in any case it is conveniently absent from the present version. Napoleon no sooner sets off to repel the "invasion" than he immediately returns and is hailed as having "saved France," whereas what he has saved is obviously the Republic (saved it, that is, until at a later moment, not shown in the film, he sees fit to destroy it).

The movie is also loaded with shabby 1920's mannerisms, such as Napoleon's cutesy-pie flirtation with Josephine (Napoleon's ways with women are now widely known, and they were direct to the point of abruptness). At the Music Hall, the most glaring 20's coynesses and anachronisms were received by the audience with delighted laughter in a mood of High Camp, which no doubt made the movie's servile hero-worship of Napoleon somewhat easier to take.

But what amuses American audiences embarrasses the French, and a variety of reasons, including its historical illiteracy, has always prevented the film's successful release in its own country. A modern French audience would take Gance's Napoleon about as well as a modern American audience would take Griffith's Abraham Lincoln. The very title *Napoleon* is a misnomer, the central character being known during the entire period covered by the film as Bonaparte—or, actually, Buonaparte, as he only Gallicized the spelling of his name when he took command of France's Army of Italy, an event which occurs at the movie's very end. Culturally speaking, Napoleon, of course, was not French but Italian. He only learned French at the age of ten and even then spoke it with an Italian accent. His father had fought the French as a Corsican nationalist. He is, in fact, one of a long stream of nationalist leaders, stretching from Alexander of Macedon to Hitler of Austria and Stalin of Georgia, who came from the cultural periphery of the nations they were to lead with such fierce purpose. The viewer will glean nothing of this from the picture. For Gance, Napoleon was pure French. We are dealing here not with history but with a kind of vulgar mythology.

THOSE with the complacent assumption that historians have reached a consensus on most of the great leaders and events of the past should be apprised that Napoleon remains a highly controversial figure, in France as well as anywhere else. He first saved, then destroyed, the Republic. Where his armies marched, serfdom and slavery were abolished (and Jews enfranchised), the Rights of Man prevailed, all men were declared equal before the law. But he laid waste most of Europe, left hundreds of thousands dead on battlefields. He proclaimed on several occasions that his authoritarian rule was only temporary, but he was not universally believed. His messianic zeal disrupted world peace; the universality of his creed left the concept of the balance of power in shards. Charles de Gaulle, of all people, did not especially admire him, writing that he had no "sense of measure."

Napoleon's glory as a military commander—for a sometime pacifist like Bertrand Russell, his most sinister feature—was also his most unassailable. All his contemporaries were in awe of him. Wellington felt that Bonaparte's presence among his troops was worth another forty thousand men. French defectors who advised the coalitions that repeatedly rose against him warned: "Never fight the French when Napoleon commands. You will be beaten. Fight his lieutenants. Only when you have the Emperor overwhelmingly outnumbered can you defeat him in the field." The advice was prescient. Dead, Napoleon fired men's minds for over a century.

French schoolbooks to this day give the Emperor "mixed notices," so to speak. Nowhere on the map of Paris can be found the name "Napoleon" (although there is a modest-sized Rue Bonaparte honoring the General of the Republic). On the other hand, the same map is strewn with the names of Napoleon's marshals (unless they betrayed him) and his victories. When the Arch of Triumph was constructed at the Etoile, Frenchmen of all political persuasions fought for sixty years under five regimes (including two repub-

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lics and two monarchies) to have their ancestors' names inscribed on the monument—a privilege reserved to officers with the rank of general and above in Napoleon's armies. As ardent a republican as Victor Hugo died bitter that he had not succeeded in getting his own father's name so inscribed. No French politician in his right mind would openly attack the shade of Napoleon. So on the street level, as it were, Abel Gance was certainly on the safe side in taking the pro-Napoleon side in the controversy. The only trouble is that he is the kind of hagiographer who destroys all evidence unfavorable to his saint.

But Napoleon is not the only subject about which French schoolbooks display ambivalence. The Revolution itself is a delicate episode. All French republican regimes owe their claim of legitimacy to the principles of the Revolution, and Bastille Day is still the French national holiday. But the Revolution led to the Terror, which Frenchmen are brought up to loathe and dread. Gance's *Napoleon* is almost as much about the Revolution as it is about Bonaparte, and on that critical subject he wobbles incoherently from effect to effect, always fatuous, always puerile. On balance one would have to say that Gance is no true friend of democracy—a conclusion hardly surprising in view of the slavishness of his worship of the leader. He has, moreover, the dim-witted tendency to view the Revolution mainly as an auspicious prologue to Napoleon, his hero.

The opening scene of the present four-hour film shows Napoleon as a youth at a military school in France. The youngsters engage in a snowball fight. Napoleon, of course, wins. Such democratic spirit as this movie has is demonstrated by Napoleon, wherever he goes, having as his "best friend" a member of the common people. At military school it is a (fictional) scullion.

The scene now shifts to Paris in the revolutionary days. We meet what Gance calls, in a title, the Revolution's "three gods." Marat is played as a spastic psychopath, Danton as a blustering bully, Robespierre as an icy despot. They are an unattractive bunch. A young officer of France's Army of the Rhine, Rouget de Lisle, comes to the revolutionary Convention with a song he has just written, *La Marseillaise* (actually not given this name until a much later stage of the Revolution). Rather implausibly, Danton teaches the Convention to sing it. Another young officer, an almost hieratic Napoleon Bonaparte (now played by the adult Albert Dieudonné, an actor of some presence—at least he's not ridiculous), congratulates the composer. At this point Louis XVI has not yet been guillotined and a title tells us, "As the monarchy crumbled Napoleon felt a source of light growing within him."

Next comes a visit by Napoleon to his native island which turns the histories of France, Corsica, and the Bonaparte family all on their heads. Napoleon communes with his "best friend the shepherd Santo Ricci" when he's not "discussing the future with his friend the ocean." The sequence is best remembered for a cavalry chase after Napoleon reveals himself as a French patriot ("Our Fatherland is France! With me!"), and for his escape by boat when he hoists the French Tricolor in place of a missing sail. It is at this point that we have the audacious cross-cutting between the storm at sea and the storm at the Convention in Paris, while a title tells us, "Napoleon was being carried to the height of history."

Part I of the movie closes with Bonaparte attacking in a driving rain at the siege of Toulon, where he won his spurs (in fact, catching the eye of Barras, future leader of the Directory, who became his protector). Although all the hoopla about this film is based, theoretically, on having at last reconstituted something close to its original version, Messrs. Brownlow and Coppola have another thirty-minute sequence which belongs somewhere near the end of Part I but which they did not show as it would have made the movie too long. The sequence tells the love story of Napoleon and a (fictional) serving girl, played by Annabella, who, it might be worth noting, went on to a higher station in life in Hollywood, where she married Tyrone Power.

Part II of *Napoleon* contains a great deal of pop-history of the Revolution, bent, naturally, to Gance's purposes. It opens with one of the most celebrated assassinations in history, that of Marat in his bathtub by the young royalist Charlotte Corday (played by the beautiful Mrs. Gance). The Terror still rages. The tumbrels roll. The tyrant Robespierre offers Bonaparte a military command, but he refuses and is jailed. (The actual Bonaparte was jailed not for having defied Robespierre but—when Robespierre fell—for having been subservient to him.)

But the 9 Thermidor approaches. Robespierre is shouted down by the Convention. Saint-Just, his handsome young disciple, described as having "the beauty of chiseled marble," rises to speak. It is one of the most embarrassing things in this entire movie that Abel Gance, never a good-looking man, chose to play Saint-Just himself. Moreover, having given himself a starring role and powdered himself up to look as pretty as possible, he could not resist the narcissistic temptation to make Saint-Just—a cold, bloodthirsty fanatic if ever there was one—a much more appealing character than he was historically.

Suddenly the tempo changes. A "beautiful," languid Saint-Just gestures gracefully, speaks with divine eloquence. In the gallery, a lovely woman cries rapturously, "They are too good for us!" Thrown for a loop by this incomprehensible about-face, the author of the official plot synopsis in the program writes, "With fiery oratory, Saint-Just brings the Assembly 'round to his side"—whereas, on the 9 Thermidor, Saint-Just (1) did not speak with fiery oratory; (2) did not speak at all; and (3) certainly did not bring the Assembly around to his side. The next day, at seven o'clock in the afternoon, he was guillotined with Robespierre. The Terror was over. For those interested in the cast, the handsomest actor of the lot in real life was the great if somewhat mad poet Antonin Artaud, but Gance had him play the twitching, nearly demented Marat.

Our pop-history billows along. We are now under the Directory. When Barras offers Bonaparte his command on the 13 Vendémiaire

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(misrepresented, to repeat, as a foreign invasion), Napoleon says, "I do not like those whom I serve" (a strange remark for a man to make to his protector), "but when the homeland is invaded, the government must be defended." Also, "I shall not sheathe my sword until order is restored." Instantly he is (title) "THE MAN WHO SAVED FRANCE." "From this morning on," he declares, "I am the Revolution!"

One of the movie's big scenes, with wild dancing, gay abandon, is the *Bal des Victimes*, one of many balls held by those who narrowly escaped the guillotine. A suddenly puritanical Bonaparte lectures a giddy, suspiciously flapper-like *merveilleuse*, "With imbeciles and layabouts like you France is heading for the abyss!" (Actually she is the kind of girl the real Napoleon rather liked.) But Bonaparte soon meets Josephine (a distinguished layabout herself and one of the period's great power groupies), marries her, and secures the command of France's Army of Italy.

It was in his first Italian campaign that Bonaparte won the startling string of victories that swiftly spread his fame throughout Europe and, above all, made him the idol of the French army. When he next returned to Paris, with the army at his back, the Republic survived for exactly three weeks. The final sequence of the movie, already referred to, is the ambitious eighteen-minute triptych with its marching men, cannons, imperial eagle, visions of childhood, the Revolution, Josephine, the shadow of the eagle as the army advances joyously, Napoleon's head with a halo effect strongly suggesting divine guidance.

THE ideology Gance attributed to this conquering army and this conqueror is pretty clearly spelled out in the film's penultimate sequence, when Bonaparte, before leaving to take up his command in Italy, visits the empty hall of the Convention at night to commune with the ghosts of the Revolution's leaders: Danton, Robespierre, Marat, and Saint-Just. The inclusion of Saint-Just in this group (still played by Gance) is a further example of the director's vanity. Given the antipathy toward these men expressed by Gance in earlier scenes of the film (except for Saint-Just played by himself, of course), one is surprised at the dignity of their bearing now. The antipathy, moreover, is not without historical justification. Danton had a far more engaging personality than the others, but there is general agreement that Robespierre, Marat, and Saint-Just were doctrinaire fanatics of an especially pitiless kind. Their speeches were filled with appeals to purify the nation with seas of blood. "To insure public tranquility 200,000 heads must roll!" cried Marat. "The vessel of the Revolution can arrive in port only on an ocean reddened with torrents of blood!" proclaimed Saint-Just. The Revolution had its moderate wing, but its extremists, architects of the Terror, remain the most famous—so Gance, having shown marked distaste for them earlier, in a dazzling display of incoherence now exalts them as keepers of the sacred flame of the Revolution.

Their exchange with Bonaparte is interesting. "The Revolution needs a strong authority," they say solemnly. "Will you be it?" Napoleon answers (title in upper case): "YES." "If the Revolution remains within France, it will perish," they affirm. "Will you carry it beyond her frontiers?" Again Napoleon replies: "YES." He then makes a speech declaring his intention to liberate all the oppressed and eradicate all frontiers ("Every man will have a common Fatherland"), ending with the revelation of his ultimate goal, the "Universal Republic." Since other states could hardly be expected to acquiesce peacefully in the abolition of their sovereignty, this amounted to a program of world conquest.

Gance no doubt expected the French public to find this a rather winning trait on Napoleon's part (and heaven knows what the audiences at Radio City Music Hall thought of it). But suddenly, amid the wallowing in hero worship and bad history, an odd note of truth has been struck. "No frontiers." World dominion. Simply that. This was exactly the perception of Napoleon's intentions formed by his enemies, which was why coalition after coalition rose against him on the Continent, until at last they brought him down.

AFTER this enormous two-part movie, Gance had planned to make five more films of comparable length covering Napoleon's career all the way to St. Helena. I cannot believe his failure to do so was a great loss to the cinema.

After *Napoleon*, Gance's career was pitiable. In 1936 he made *Beethoven's Great Love*. His stock in trade, such as it was, was mining history, and pseudo-history, for heroic figures. In the 50's he made the appalling *La Tour de Nesles*, about France's notorious 16th-century Queen Margot, and in 1963 the equally appalling *Cyrano and d'Artagnan*, about the joint adventures of Edmond Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac and Alexandre Dumas's d'Artagnan of *The Three Musketeers*, an attempt to exploit the work of more successful fictionalizers than himself. These last were dismal failures in France, but *Cyrano and d'Artagnan* was received with great respect at the New York Film Festival.

To my knowledge, Gance's only substantial success in the last fifty years has been his *Austerlitz*, in about 1960, which returned again to his beloved Napoleon. A completely nondescript work, bearing no trace of even the young director's audacity, the film is a succession of historical scenes loosely organized around one of the Emperor's most brilliant victories, which destroyed the Third Coalition. Now over ninety, Gance is dreaming of still another epic movie, this time: *Christopher Columbus*.

But despite the feebleness of his later works, it is a plain falsehood to claim that Gance and his *Napoleon* were forgotten. They are in all the film history books, and usually with very high marks. *Napoleon*, if in a truncated version, has played regularly all these years at the Paris Cinémathèque. Gance has been an honored member of the French delegation to more international film gatherings than I would care to count. In 1967 the New York Festival presented a version of *Napoleon* that ran a full four hours, though it lacked some footage included in the present version. A great high-

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light of the 1971 New York Film Festival was a new sound version of *Napoleon* put together by Gance himself, with some footage freshly shot. Honored in New York, this version, called in French *Bonaparte and the Revolution* (a more accurate title), was a fiasco in France. *Napoleon*, in any event, far from being forgotten, is one of the best remembered "masterpieces" in film history. I would probably not be writing about it, in sum, if it were not for the frenzied reception it is being given.

WHY, then, were the crowds at the Music Hall cheering so wildly? I, again, refuse to entertain seriously the notion that they were cheering for a silent film masterpiece. A revival of Jean Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite*, with an unknown score by Virgil Thomson, performed on the stage by a sixty-piece orchestra, would have received warm, Lincoln Center-type applause, but nothing like this. These people were cheering for Napoleon.

Their cheering, on the other hand, was quirky. When Bonaparte, at one point in the film, orders no smoking in the building, there was a gleeful roar of approval. In the movie the danger is from gunpowder being moved, whereas the audience was thinking of the Surgeon General's warning. Another roar of anachronistic applause, this one thunderous, wall to wall, came when Bonaparte orders all private citizens to turn in their firearms. Napoleon is concerned for the security of the state, keeping weapons out of the hands of potential insurgents, while the audience was protesting against Saturday-night specials used by such anti-social elements as the man who had just killed John Lennon.

Say what you will, there is something a little odd about an audience afraid of delinquents on Central Park West and secondhand cigarette smoke cheering so madly for one of the boldest and most devastating war chiefs of history, a man not afraid of gunsmoke or any other kind of smoke and so little in fear of death by firearms that the Imperial Guard once refused to attack until the Emperor had retired from the front line.

There was, of course, the mood of High Camp that pervaded the evening, the audience giggling and laughing delightedly not only at Gance's fictional inanities but at a number of Bonaparte's authentic remarks. When, during an attack, one of his lieutenants reports to him that an assigned military task is impossible, Napoleon cries, " 'Impossible' is not French!" The audience shrieked with laughter. But Napoleon meant it. It was once said in his presence that one of his generals, Kléber, was not French but a German-speaking Alsatian. Napoleon dismissed the remark with a sardonic, *"Il sabre en français"* ("He sabers in French"). When the accolade was repeated to Kléber, who knew the smell of gunpowder and the price paid on the battlefield for all these liberations and these French ideals, he did not giggle, but was filled with pride. Such is the power of a patriotic creed at its apogee.

The night I saw *Napoleon* at the Radio City Music Hall, many members of the audience were already seeing it for a second or third time, their cheers and gales of laughter synchronized responsively in a manner suggesting nothing so much as an audience of teenagers at a Saturday midnight viewing of *The Rocky Horror Show*.

But through this screen of camp, just what are we witnessing? It is a point on which reasonable men may differ. Some will say it is a revival of true patriotism, for which view a solid case can be built: Teheran, Afghanistan, the freeing of the hostages, the Reagan victory, the "born-again hawk" stances of even the Carter administration, the indubitable new groundswell of nationalism that has swept the country. I myself tend to a more skeptical view—at least for the specific audience I saw in action.

I believe there is such a thing as a pornography of patriotism—people whose channels of true patriotism are blocked must express this emotion in other ways, often in a debased form. It is not unrelated to what George Orwell called "transposed nationalism." Now Abel Gance's *Napoleon* is probably the most rabidly patriotic movie in film history. It is French! French! French! France's mission! France's destiny! Everthing good is French. I propose a simple rule. Could the members of the audience at the Music Hall use the word "American," without embarrassment, and with anything like the exorbitant passion given the word "French" in this film? Do they feel their own nation has freedoms and other values that are worth defending, let alone spreading throughout the world, even by force of arms? Do they have the smallest, tiniest part of Napoleon Bonaparte's relentless, seething will to prevail? Do they have it now? Is it growing within them? The future will tell.

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James Michener's Docudramas

Pearl K. Bell

JAMES MICHENER's long and earnest novels, which can come to well over 800 pages, have not been found worthy of even the most casual mention in serious studies of contemporary American fiction, and neither do they appear on college-literature reading lists. None of this has made a particle of difference to his readers: as the New York *Times* recently reported, with understandable awe, his books have sold twenty million copies and earned eight million dollars. Precisely because James Michener is one of the most phenomenally popular writers in America today, it is a challenge to account for the enormous appeal of historical tomes like *Centennial, The Source, Chesapeake, Hawaii,* and his latest, *The Covenant.** Why do they zoom to first place on the best-seller list the moment they appear, and stay there, immovable as Fort Knox, for month after gold-bearing month? What does this popularity tell us about the vagaries of popular taste and culture?

Michener's panoramic chronicles are a very different breed of fiction from the classic schlock—by the likes of Sidney Sheldon, Harold Robbins, or Stephen King—that ordinarily hogs the best-seller list, for Michener's novels are short on sex and long on facts. Though he enlivens and simplifies the dusty record of the past by means of invented characters, incidents, and dialogue, and has a canny respect for the allure of romance and melodrama, his plots are braced with a solid rigging of expert knowledge about the history, archeology, religion, language, geology, wildlife, agriculture, and specialized social and economic lore of the particular region—Afghanistan or Colorado, Israel or South Africa—that he stakes out for exploration and proceeds to conquer.

Saturated in information and local color, Michener's novels overflow with an instructive abundance of scrupulously vetted dates, customs, and statistics. In his "Jewish" novel, *The Source* (1965), he takes a present-day archeological dig in the western Galilee as his point of departure, and inundates the reader with centuries of reenacted Jewish, Christian, and Muslim history, plus maps, population tables, and scientific drawings of objects unearthed from the ancient mound. In Michener's current blockbuster, which moves at an unhurried pace through 15,000 years of South African history, the reader's task is eased by archeological reports, genealogical charts, and a glossary of Afrikaans words "without which the narrative would lack verisimilitude."

In the course of the centuries spanned in the novel, we soak up an enormous amount of historical detail about matters ranging from the way the tiny Bushmen who roamed southern Africa thousands of years ago hunted rhinoceros to the humiliation and suffering inflicted on individual lives by the laws enforcing apartheid today. As we progress from the earliest 17th-century Dutch settlements at the Cape of Good Hope, to the arrival and eventual domination of the English colonists, and on to the Great Trek of the Boers into the Transvaal and the devastation on both sides that accompanied the white migration into black tribal lands, Michener's fidelity to the factual truth of these dramatic events is obviously beyond cavil.

As if anyone would dream of doubting the author's reliability and industry, Michener informs us, in four dense pages of acknowledgments, that in the course of his research he journeyed five thousand miles from Cape Town to the Transvaal; descended into gold mines; inspected archeological sites; toured wildlife preserves; "made continuous effort to meet with and understand black spokesmen," including several visits to Soweto without government watchdogs; and traveled extensively over the sites of the Xhosa and Zulu wars. And then the seventy-three-year old novelist went home and wrote *The Covenant,* which is almost 900 pages long. Who can fail to admire such energy?

IT DOES not seem unreasonable, though, to wish that he had paid as close attention to his prose as he does to his facts. His style is either workhorse-monotonous or banal-portentous, particularly when he peers, as he unfortunately does rather often, into the telescope of hindsight for a rueful forecast of things to come. A 17th-century Dutch colonist, "staring down the long corridor of Cape history," foresees the end of the Hottentots, and tears of compassion flood his eyes as he realizes that "white men and brown were destined to live their different lives, one the master, one the outcast, and any attempt to bridge the gap would forever be doomed by the characters of the persons involved."

It is difficult, however, to discuss Michener's literary quality because none of the usual terms of critical judgment can be usefully applied. All the axiomatic givens seem to have passed him by: no ambiguity, no irony, no paradox, no conceits. His narrative devices, often shamelessly contrived, would have been scorned by the late Victorians. In dividing his principal fictitious characters into three fecund families—the Afrikaner Van Doorns,

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* Random House, 874 pp., $15.95.

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the English Saltwoods, and the black Nxumalos—Michener crudely attempts to demonstrate continuity in the different strains of the South African experience. The various members of these families who turn up without fail in each era are in the main drawn with stencils to clarify their didactic function in the narrative—some are brave, others weak, this one bigoted, that one noble. Down the long corridor of history they march, conveniently entwined at every bend of fate by that ancient drudge, the long arm of coincidence. And, of course, the schematically neat design deprives them of any convincing individuality. It is not surprising that only the actual people who enter the story now and then, such as those flamboyant buccaneers of the Kimberley diamond fields, Cecil Rhodes and Barney Barnato, have any genuine idiosyncratic vitality, because in portraying them Michener can rely on his lifeline, the historical record, instead of his own pale and homiletic imaginings.

In trying to figure out the secret of Michener's success, it is tempting to say that he is the ideal "middlebrow" novelist for a predominantly middlebrow culture whose typical reader is not in the least put off by his uninspired writing and characters or by his preachy habit of telling us how to think about the events he has transcribed with such diligent care. But Michener's popularity is not limited to the United States; he has an enormous following in Europe, where he is apparently taken more seriously by critics than he is in his own country. (Maybe he reads better in translation.)

Michener's novels would seem to be the perfect example of "midcult" in the categories of pop sociology that Dwight Macdonald proposed twenty years ago—those of masscult, midcult, and high culture. The difficulty here is that Macdonald confused three different aspects of the cultural issue: the taste of the audience, the intention of the writer, and the artistic quality of the work itself. Macdonald's categories are suggestive, but they have to be used with caution. In recent years they have become much less helpful because writers themselves have been blurring the lines almost to the point of extinction.

Macdonald defined masscult as a parody of high art that was in essence anti-art and aimed only to please the crowd. But in the 60's and beyond, in the heyday of the put-on, novelists belonging (at least in their own view) to high culture began to parody high art and its lofty aspirations, and embraced the mindlessness of mass culture (or pop-cult, as it came to be called) with defiant exhilaration. Writers like John Barth and Donald Barthelme turned the seriousness of traditional culture into a joke and ridiculed intellectual and sociological claims that any valid discriminations could be made about art *or* life. In the hands of the so-called "black humorists" like Bruce Jay Friedman and other absurdist birds of passage, up to and including Tom Robbins, the whole of American life serves as the butt of their quasi-nihilistic derision. By now, this form of literary chic has had its day, as the incoherent vulgarity of Joseph Heller's *Good as Gold* makes dismally plain.

The essence of midcult writing, in Macdonald's view, was the grandiose pretensions to be found in such work as Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, any novel by James Gould Cozzens, and Archibald MacLeish's play *J.B.* The archetypical midcult profundity, in Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, averred that "There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being." Today such pretentiousness has become endemic in the work of all sorts of novelists taken with immense seriousness by people who should know better. In the 60's and 70's, many middlebrow writers, caught up in the political frenzy of those decades, tried to "deepen" their stories not with eternal verities but with radical pieties. E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* and *Loon Lake* are typical of this shift in midcult, with their exhausted attempts at stylistic experiment and their sentimental nostalgia for a noble past when the class struggle could still inflame the hearts of men. In the critical inflation of "serious" fiction, Doctorow, who in Macdonald's scheme would have belonged among midcult writers, is taken for a highbrow novelist.

Where does all this leave a writer like James Michener? He does not fit into Macdonald's midcult category since he does not imitate serious literary art, nor does he present himself and his work as part of high culture. His objective is the factually meticulous transcription of the past in easily comprehensible form, and if he does harbor any pretensions, they are aimed not at the tone and manner of literary artists but at the intellectual authority of the historian. It is in the appeal to his multitudes of readers, who do not think of themselves as consumers of high art, that Michener's quintessential middlebrowness can be found.

Like all historical novels, Michener's *The Covenant* mingles the real and fictitious, but the author's obsession with accuracy even in the minutest trivia—how much did Cecil Rhodes pay Barney Barnato for his rights in the diamond mines (£5,338,650) and what did Lord Roberts, an English general in the Boer War, look like (five-feet-four, 123 pounds, blind in one eye)—and his determination to provide his readers with a flawlessly correct account of what actually happened in peace and war suggest that he regards himself as a teacher even more than a novelist.

It seems doubtful that most of the thousands shelling out $15.95 for *The Covenant* have a passionate curiosity about the history of South Africa. What perhaps draws them to Michener's magnet is the thought that they are getting solid value for their money and learning a great deal without arduous intellectual effort. It is the unequivocal certainty that one can trust Michener to deliver the goods, that his facts, significant or trivial, are always right, that may in large part account for his stature among people hungry for authenticity. He knows this well, and to nip any doubts straight off—as though anyone would dare!—Michener confides, in an extraordinary note to

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The Covenant, that he read through the entire manuscript "with a distinguished South African editor and journalist" *seven times, twice aloud*, "to clarify historical and social factors which an outsider might misinterpret, to correct verbal usage, to verify data difficult to check." Staggering though such Herculean labor in pursuit of accuracy may be, a nagging question pops up: why should it matter so much to a novelist?

IT IS as though Michener takes with astonishing literalness Mary McCarthy's observation that "the distinctive mark of the novel is its concern with the actual world, the world of fact, of the verifiable, of figures, even, and statistics." But the literalness of fact or the indisputable transcription of historical events, even for the sake of verisimilitude, pales beside the novelist's art. What punctilious exposition of the facts can compare with the richly expressive portrayal of revolutionary motives and the shadow world of anarchist conspiracy that one finds in James's *The Princess Casamassima* and Conrad's *The Secret Agent*? In the preface to his novel, James claimed that he did no research for his story of anarchist politics. As it happens, his guesswork was inspired, but this does not alter the truth of his argument that "if you haven't, for fiction, the root of the matter in you, haven't the sense of life and the penetrating imagination, you are a fool in the very presence of the revealed and assured."

For the true novelist, imagination does the work of the literal, and does it more competently. Even in such popular historical fiction as Robert Graves's *I, Claudius* and Mary Renault's *The Last of the Wine*, there is no attempt to demonstrate beyond all possible doubt that the stories adhere faithfully to the record. Novelists can plunder the past for their transfigurations of reality, but they need not, and should not, revere it. So what if Graves took the most high-handed liberties in his account of imperial Rome? He brought Augustus and Claudius and their attendant vipers to a high pitch of psychological and dramatic power, and even pedants must acknowledge that he did not violate history, he transcended it. This does not happen in *The Covenant*, which is too "authentic" for its own good.

TO BE fair, let us admit that there is nothing much to be gained from comparing James Michener with novelists of a kind he has never pretended to be. His shortcomings of style and characterization, the stilted dialogue, the sentimental indulgence in what-might-have-been if at some point in those 15,000 years someone had been farsighted enough to act in a way that would, as he likes to put it, "have altered the course of history"—why hit Michener over the head with all this when he modestly refuses to inflate his talents? Though one might wish his devices less simplistic, it is surely not dishonorable that along with all the self-improving information he offers his readers, he tries to improve their hearts as well by exposing, as he has done in many of his books, the torment and destruction caused by racial intolerance and religious bigotry.

What is not at all creditable, however, is his urge to reinforce the soggy liberal optimism of his middlebrow audience, not because he panders to its craving for reassurance in a confusing and heartless world, but because he shares its values and attitudes so completely. To allow that the burden of history's lessons may be anything but comforting—that the triumph of reason and justice is far from inevitable—goes against the grain of the sort of middlebrow entertainment that resists any threat to the bright side. In the concluding pages of *The Source*, after the Israeli archeologist and the Arab archeologist have exchanged bitter words about the Palestinians, Michener reaches instinctively for the silver lining. After all, declares the wise Israeli, Arab and Jew are not all that far apart, since they both believe in "the same partnership of God, and a particular land, and a chosen people. We're very old brothers ... and in the future we shall meet many times, for we understand each other."

In *The Covenant*, perhaps because the problematic uncertainties of South Africa's future lend themselves so easily to prophecies of doom, Michener sounds his customary note of hope more cautiously. He brings his own political commentary into the final chapter in the voice of an American geologist, Philip Smallwood, who makes a valiant effort to be objective and fair-minded to all sides. Though he is appalled by the gun-toting intransigence of the Afrikaner Nationalists and the monstrous injustice of apartheid, nonetheless he can foresee a time in which "a grand coalition of black capacity, Colored adaptability, English skill, and Afrikaner force could forge a nation that would be one of the most powerful on earth... with a way of life that most other people would envy." None of Michener's facts lends any credence to this sanguine vision, and it is ironic that in the end all that labor to get things right counts for less than the need to end on an upbeat.

WHAT, then, are these hefty tomes of Michener's, since they are not really novels and not really history, not genuine art nor awful kitsch? If we lift our eyes from the printed page to the brightly lit television screen, it is apparent that they are "docudramas," the fictional equivalent of *Roots*, *Holocaust*, and *Shogun* (the last advertised by the network as a "TV novel"). Like the TV docudramas, his books convey the sweep of history through its high moments, enacted in simple, dramatic, pictorially vivid scenes whose moral and meaning are immediately and unambiguously clear. A great, or even serious, novel, as we have seen repeatedly, cannot be translated into a movie or television special because the visual form works through images, and the serious novel works through language. Novels have to be read. No such obstacles face television in assimilating the fact/fiction of a Michener. In the end, the printed docudrama and its TV version are interchangeable. One might almost say that they were literally made for each other. What we have here is a new genre of the information age.

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Books in Review

Crisis in the Humanities

THE HUMANITIES IN AMERICAN LIFE: REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE HUMANITIES. *University of California Press. 192 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by SAMUEL LIPMAN

THE appointment of a commission of inquiry is never a sign of health in the subject being studied. The more prestigious the inquirers, the sicker the patient is assumed to be. So it is with the humanities in our time, and the appearance of this new report, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and signed by the pillars of the American educational establishment, augurs no better for the future of civilized learning than did its predecessor, the 1964 study sponsored by (among others) the American Council of Learned Societies.

The earlier report was strongly influential in the creation the following year of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an institution whose fortunes have until recently waxed as the humanities themselves have waned. The current report quite properly begins with a consideration of just what the humanities are that should have a place in American life. Not surprisingly, to this slippery question the Rockefeller Commission advances an all-inclusive, not to say slippery, answer.

For the notables who signed this report—among them such stars as Richard Lyman (President of the Rockefeller Foundation), Robert Coles (Professor of Psychiatry and Medical Humanities at Harvard), Richard Lamm (Governor of Colorado), Martin Marty (Professor of the History of Modern Christianity at the University of Chicago), and Harry Woolf (Director of the Institute for Advanced Study)—the humanities are based on "languages and literature, history and philosophy," but they are vastly more than even the sum of these and related fields. Rather, they "mirror our own image and our image of the world"; in essence, they are "a spirit or an attitude toward humanity." Along with this unbounded definition is assumed a natural corollary: those who engage professionally in the humanities are humanists. Like the subjects they treat, humanists are to be found in all areas and cultures, in all styles and qualities, in possession of all degrees of relevance and appeal. The circle is thus complete: humanists are defined by their practice and the humanities are defined by their practitioners.

For the Rockefeller team (in contrast, it must be said, to the 1964 report) the essence of the humanities clearly does not lie in any traditional body of great works. As Hilton Kramer has pointed out in a devastating review of this new report in the New York *Times*, the great figures of classical and modern humanism are strikingly absent from these pages. Even such a central figure in the debate over the value of the humanities as Matthew Arnold—as well, one might add, as his cherished adversary Cardinal Newman—is here an unperson. The very idea of choosing mentors so strict and demanding could only be anathema to the writers of words like these:

> Because each generation views the factual basis of the humanities from a new vantage point, education should focus on major themes common to human experience rather than adhere to a rigid canon of "great works." Yet some works have been so important in shaping our cultural heritage that it is foolish to ignore them in the classroom or omit them from the shelves of school libraries. All young people should be introduced to classics from the Western cultural tradition, foreign cultures, and American racial and ethnic groups. In selecting appropriate works and teaching them, teachers must be sensitive to the age, background, and capacities of individual students.

As with great works, so with great values. The report does not regard the humanities as inculcators of such traditional values as honor, courage, family, or country. These hitherto sacrosanct goals are now, one must assume, capable only of existential definition. In their place, the report appears to advocate a kind of rootless skepticism:

> By developing conceptual skills and imparting knowledge of traditions, the humanities encourage a critical examination of human values ... in matters of human action, choice, and belief ... the evidence is often ambiguous. The humanities do not impose any single set of normative values, whether moral, social, or aesthetic; rather, . . . they give historical perspective . . . [they] bring to life the ideal of cultural pluralism by expanding the number of perspectives from which questions of value may be viewed, by enlarging young people's social and historical consciousness, and by activating an imaginative critical spirit.

Where content is so hollow, all that can be left is process, doing one knows not what for reasons one knows not why. In our time such a deracinating process is called education. And education is, in a broad sense, what the Rockefeller report is about. But precisely because *what* is to be taught is so vague, amorphous, and general, the discussion of education here is metamorphosed into nothing more elevated than an ingenious advocacy of jobs for those among the unemployed and underemployed who happen to call themselves humanists.

This collapsing of the humanities into the fate of those teaching them is amply conveyed more than once in the report, along with an implicit devaluation of learning for its own sake:

SAMUEL LIPMAN, COMMENTARY*'s music critic, is the author of* Music After Modernism.

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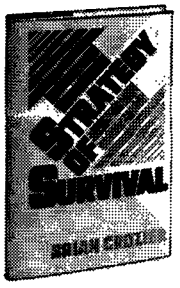

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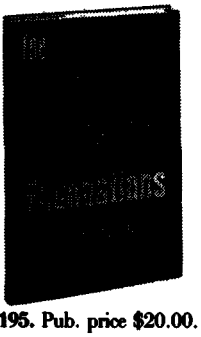

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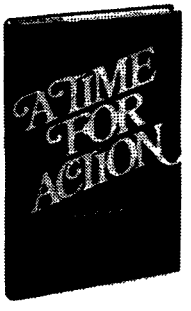

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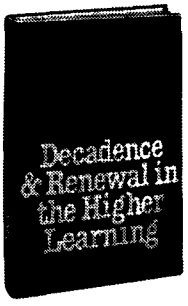

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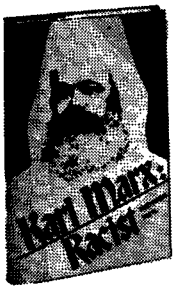

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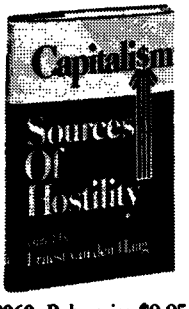

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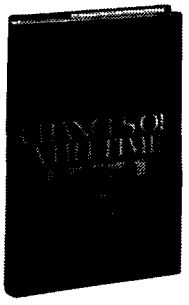

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> Graduate programs in the humanities that cannot offer students reasonable prospects of employment, whether academic or non-academic, should be abolished.

Two pages later, the point is made again:

> The continued vitality of the humanities depends on the successful adjustment of graduate institutions to the job crisis.

But cutting programs—even those of no value to students who will be looking for employment—will itself further reduce the number of positions available. The report sees clearly that what is therefore needed is rather an *expansion* in humanities programs sufficient to keep the educational machine running at full speed. How is such an expansion to be managed? Here, indeed, is the meat of the commission's thirty-one recommendations; here the positions taken are both simple and audacious.

The introduction of humanities-oriented and humanist-directed programs is to be mandated at every level of schooling, covering every level of student. Attempts to teach basic literacy to children and adults alike are to be enriched with the humanities. At the opposite end of the educational spectrum, doctors, lawyers, businessmen (and, no doubt, Indian chiefs as well) are to be indoctrinated with humanistic skills. Museums and libraries are to be urged to present, with the proper amount of humanist consultation, programs oriented to the humanities. The mass media are to be used to convey the needful gospel. It all suggests a sweeping rule: no American institution, public or private, indeed no aspect of American life whatsoever, should henceforth be without its humanist-administered component.

ALL this, of course, takes money. The Rockefeller report advocates increased support for every kind of program from training to employment, from fellowships to sabbaticals, from exhibitions to archives, from audience-development to planning for the future. This support is to be extended both in the form of challenge grants and operating subsidies. The funds themselves are to come from every sort of private, foundation, and corporate giver, with particular emphasis to be placed on developing the relatively untapped area of business support for the humanities. And in a perhaps last yearning glance at the federal government as an endless cornucopia of the good, contributions are exhorted from a variety of Washington sources, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Department of the Interior, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the new Department of Education.

There are, to be sure, aspects even of this report which may give some limited comfort to those whose interest in the humanities and civilized culture as a whole is in the highest sense amateur rather than professional. The report recognizes the present drop in the standard of reading and writing skills; it acknowledges the damage done in the recent past by the system-wide search for novelty in programs and approaches; it admits that the long-term health of the humanities is not always well served by the concentration on marketing required by any thoroughgoing attempt at making the humanities truly popular. But having made these cogent points, the report does nothing to come to grips with the basic problems surrounding the place of the humanities in American life. These problems are principally two: what is the intellectual content of the humanities, and what are the proper substantive values which this content enshrines?

A traditional answer to the problem of the intellectual content of the humanities might be that they consist, in a way which changes so slowly as to seem almost unchanging, of the monuments of the Western tradition in both its secular and religious forms, along with a much more limited investigation of the highest achievements of other, non-Western civilizations. This view of the humanities finds them based in high culture, the enduring product of elites transmitted in most cases by writing but also by consciously created works of plastic, visual, and musical art. It need hardly be added that to this domain of culture are properly admitted those supporting scientific and archival disciplines necessary to assemble coherent areas of understanding.

These various areas of the life of the mind have, however, usually been studied for reasons which go far beyond their great inherent intellectual and aesthetic fascination. Though the humanities charm and move us because they are concerned with universal passions, their study has been advocated for centuries not because of this but because of the desirability of the values they embody. These values are elite, authoritative, and sure of themselves; they speak in the accents and out of the thoughts of the leading classes of the societies which together have produced the West. They link ideals of rank and order, war and courage, sacrifice and suffering, discipline and obedience, individuality and community, rationality and revelation, and, not least, God and man, to the evolving context of Western history.

This conception of the humanities was seen to be both correct and even necessary so long as the West was ascendant. The domestic and foreign sway of the West from the Renaissance to World War I provided a worldwide umbrella for this conception, and even after political power had passed from aristocracies to formerly subordinate classes, habits of leadership and deference assured the continuance of traditional values in education and society.

THIS situation clearly no longer obtains. Neither the values nor the political structures of the West—in our case of the United States—command unanimous assent at home. Abroad, the populous Third World defines itself in part by its opposition to our ideals and politics. Our educators and our educated, no less than our public officials, professionals, and businessmen, trim their sails to the winds of social and ideological change; the ideal of the melting pot has been replaced by something very close to ethnic fission. That subgroup of the educated commonly called the intellectuals both assuages its guilt and sometimes makes its fortune by acting as mid-

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wife to what it sees as liberating destiny.

But a severe problem poses itself for such self-doubting facilitators of change. This problem is nothing else than the dilemma of the humanities expressed in personal terms: just what do such intellectuals, educated as they are in the traditions and habits of the West, have to say to those, not only diverse but anarchic, who lack not only our past but even an awareness of their own?

Here is the reason the Rockefeller report is so scant on the question of content when it comes to the humanities in American life. Those responsible for this document are on the one hand unable to support fully the great tradition or to speak for the values of an elite culture; on the other hand they are unable to participate authentically in cultural worlds foreign to their own background. They take refuge, therefore, in the comfortable liberal exhortation of a larger pie with more and bigger slices for all. Yet regardless of how many debts this report discharges, and regardless of how many conflicting interests it satisfies, the commission's basic refusal to take either an intellectual or a social stand can only guarantee a simple outcome for its recommendations: at first irrelevance, finally oblivion.

"Der Jude"

THE JEW: ESSAYS FROM MARTIN BUBER'S JOURNAL, *Der Jude*, 1916-1928. Selected, edited, and introduced by ARTHUR A. COHEN. Translated from the German by JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL. *University of Alabama Press. 305 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by HYAM MACCOBY

IN 1916, in the middle of World War I, Martin Buber, then thirty-eight years old, launched the periodical *Der Jude*, with the cooperation of Robert and Felix Weltsch, Hans Kohn, and Max Brod. This was an extraordinary publication, not least in the forthrightness of its name. It struggled on for eight years, employing the talents of nearly all the main Jewish figures then writing in German, and some writing in other languages; included were Franz Kafka, S.Y. Agnon, Hermann Cohen, Gershom Scholem, Gustav Landauer, Jacob Klatzkin, Franz Rosenzweig, Leo Strauss, Franz Werfel, Hugo Bergmann, Romain Rolland, Benno Jacob, Josef Meisl, and Elias Auerbach. But throughout, the main informing spirit of the periodical was Martin Buber himself, who contributed many weighty articles later published in book form and

HYAM MACCOBY *teaches at the Leo-Baeck College in London and is the author of* Revolution in Judea: Jesus and the Jewish Resistance (*Taplinger*).

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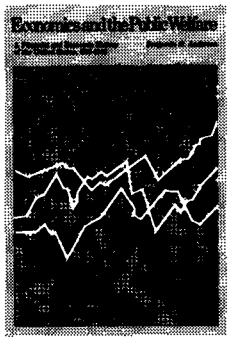

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By Benjamin M. Anderson

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Benjamin M. Anderson taught economics at Columbia, Harvard, and the University of California. He was an economist for the Chase Manhattan Bank and for many years edited the *Chase Economic Bulletin*.

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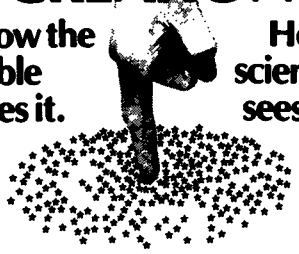
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sought, through *Der Jude* as through his other activities, to raise Jewish consciousness and pride and to advocate the Zionist solution to the contradictions of Jewish existence in exile.

At first, as Arthur A. Cohen points out in his introduction to this volume of selected articles from *Der Jude*, Buber was not free from confusions that might have destroyed the value and influence of the periodical. His romantic attachment to nationalism took the form of an enthusiastic endorsement of the war, which he considered a training-ground for manly virtues and even as an occasion for the alliance of Jewish with German nationalism. Buber did not, however, go so far in his war fever as did the philosopher Hermann Cohen, who regarded the conflict as the ideal ground for a fusion of his German and Jewish identities; being an anti-Zionist, Cohen saw no contradiction here at all. The strength of the Jewish illusion of German-Jewish symbiosis, of which Gershom Scholem has in our time written so eloquently, can be understood a little better from the reactions to the war of these two great men, both of whom, in their different ways, stood for a strong Jewish identification.

At any rate, Buber's war fever did not last. Chiefly through the influence of his old friend Gustav Landauer, who wrote a long letter criticizing his stance point by point, Buber became convinced that there was nothing admirable in German imperialism. In subsequent articles in *Der Jude*, Buber repudiated his former standpoint, thus retaining his moral ascendancy over his Jewish contemporaries.

IT WAS certainly an excellent idea to provide for the English-reading public a selection of articles from *Der Jude*. Nothing could give a better sense of that brilliant and energetic generation, through whom Judaism and Zionism achieved intellectual status in the modern world. Arthur A. Cohen, the cultivated and subtle author of *The Natural and the Supernatural Jew* and other books, would seem the ideal person to implement such a project. I approached the present book, therefore, with pleasurable anticipation. Unfortunately, I finished it with a sense of disappointment.

I do not quarrel with the editor's eccentric but defensible decision to exclude items of purely historical interest, and also all items available in English elsewhere—even though this austere move has meant sacrificing much of what is humanly interesting and brilliant in *Der Jude*. Nor do I quarrel with the editor's actual selection, which includes such unfamiliar gems as Hans Kohn's "Nationalism," Jacob Klatzkin's "Germanism and Judaism: A Critique," Gustav Landauer on Strindberg, and Franz Rosenzweig on "Apologetic Thinking."

It is with the execution, rather than with the design, of the book that I find myself dissatisfied. It starts well enough, with a lucid and helpful introduction, outlining the history of *Der Jude* and giving its place in Buber's development and in the revival of Jewish nationalism and culture; this is an editorial task well performed. The rest consists of the translations themselves, prefaced by explanatory notes or introductions of varying lengths by the editor. In these, Cohen often writes in a most impenetrable style. Sometimes one has to turn to the article itself in the hope of understanding his intended explication. Here is a not unrepresentative example: "Indeed, unlike psychoanalytical inquiry, where the mechanism of the aphasic unconscious is near at hand and obdurate, the motives to the writing of history appear less opaque." Translated into English, this would read: "Historians often have subjective motives. These motives, being nearer the surface of consciousness, are easier to understand than those investigated by psychoanalysts." On the same page we find: "It is often a question of determining the governance of the imagination to decide whether its logic has been coherently observed, but it is rarely the case that a well-made poem or a great novel or an enduring play is constructed without an obsessional drive, a premise of causality, a notion of how persons and events cohere." I despair

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of translating this into English, as I do not understand the syntax of the first clause.

On reading the translated articles themselves, I was often afflicted by the same sense of bafflement. Here at least I had a remedy: when bemused, I could look up the original German. Cohen refers in his acknowledgments to the frequent obscurity of the texts, which "not even the splendid Joachim Neugroschel could always overcome." But in most cases, when brought to a halt by the translation, I found on investigation that the German was perfectly clear. In other cases, the fault is not in the translation *or* in the original, but in the editing. For example, page 201 of the English text is unintelligible; the reason, I discovered, is simply that 33 lines of the German text have been omitted (presumably the editor lost a page of the translation). A similar catastrophe occurs on page 173, where 22 lines of German text are missing, with chaotic results.

I DO NOT mean to dismiss this entire work as a failure. It is, after all, a huge undertaking, a great deal of which is valuable. We are not likely to get another anthology in English from *Der Jude*, and this book fills a gap. But it is not really comfortable or pleasurable to read, and lapses such as those cited above undermine the confidence that is so desirable in reading a work of translation.

The trouble, I think, is that the editor has fallen between two stools. He has wanted to be much more than an ordinary editor—to conduct a full and equal dialogue with his chosen authors. This is a laudable ambition in which at times he succeeds, especially when he becomes sufficiently engaged to forgo obscurity. At such times he argues with and even roundly criticizes his contributors in a way that annihilates the distance between them and brings the issues to life. But in pursuing a high editorial ideal, he has neglected the no less demanding editorial task of insuring a certain level of readability, intelligibility, and accuracy. The result must therefore be judged only a partial success.

The Fuel of Achievement

AMBITION: THE SECRET PASSION. By JOSEPH EPSTEIN. *Dutton. 312 pp. $13.95.*

Reviewed by STEPHEN MILLER

LIKE a Hindu god, ambition takes many forms—some distasteful, others attractive, some dangerous, others benign. Shakespeare depicted ambition in all its variety: the destructive ambition of Iago, the disciplined ambition of Prince Hal, the ludicrous ambition of Caliban, the "vaulting ambition" of Macbeth. Of *Macbeth*, Samuel Johnson said that in it "the danger of ambition is well described," yet he also told Boswell that "ambition is a noble passion." He himself, although he wrote "The Vanity of Human Wishes," a poem that pours cold water on ambition, was a decidedly ambitious man who consorted with a group of ambitious men: Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, Edward Gibbon, David Garrick, Adam Smith, Richard Sheridan, and of course Boswell. And then there is the extraordinary drive of Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, whose "immensely ambitious" writing plan (as he refers to it in *The Oak and the Calf*) has been to chronicle "the dying wishes of the millions whose last whisper, last moan, had been cut short on some hut floor in some prison camp."

A look at the varied landscape of ambition makes it clear that to say someone is ambitious is to say very little about him. We need to know the character—or the intent—of his ambition. Nevertheless, ambition is a passion that bears watching because it smacks of excess. As the first entry in the Oxford English Dictionary has it, ambition is "the eager or inordinate desire of honor or preferment." The third entry offers a more attractive definition: "a strong desire to be or do anything creditable." Both senses of the word were current in Shakespeare's time

STEPHEN MILLER *is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C.*

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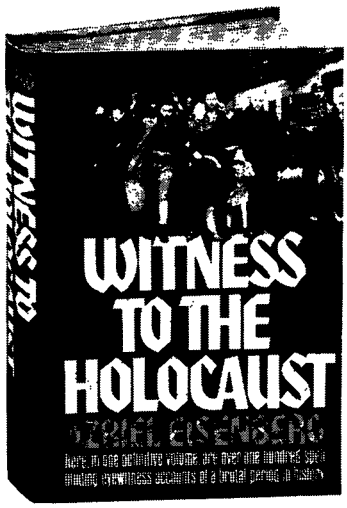

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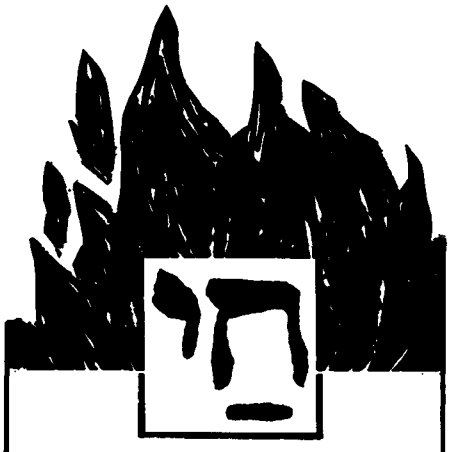

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and both remain current to this day.

In *Ambition: The Secret Passion*, Joseph Epstein is more inclined to praise than to condemn. "To discourage ambition," he says, "is to discourage dreams of grandeur and greatness." But there are dreams and dreams—those of Churchill and de Gaulle, those of Hitler and Stalin. It is true, as Epstein says, that "ambition has at all times been the passion that best releases the energies that make civilization possible," but it is also true that ambition has released energies that have been civilization's scourge. The "fuel of achievement" is also the engine of destruction.

Epstein's book, however, is less a defense of ambition in general—he has little to say about the heroes of history—than a defense of commercial ambition, which has been the animating force in American life. Before the 18th century, commercial ambition was usually decried as a low and even immoral variety of the species. But in that century a number of writers—including Montesquieu, Hume, Johnson, and Adam Smith—began to argue that although commercial men were inclined to be narrow and boorish, they were also prudent and moderate and did not get embroiled in religious or political controversy. Summing up the views of the 18th-century defenders of commerce, Tocqueville said in *Democracy in America*: "Violent political passions have little hold on men whose whole thoughts are bent on the pursuit of well-being. Their excitement about small matters makes them calm about great ones." Only in predominantly commercial societies could liberty be allowed to exist, because only in such societies would liberty not result in violent civic discord.

The framers of the Amercian Constitution, especially Madison and Hamilton, agreed with this. In *The Federalist* they argued that only if America became an extended commercial republic, a republic in which a variety of economic interests were "regulated" by national legislators, could it become strong, stable, and prosperous—and avoid the discord that had contributed to the downfall of so many republics.

In America, then, a country devoid of hereditary privilege where all men were free to better their condition, commerce was actively encouraged. According to John Adams, "There is no people on earth so ambitious as the people of America"—ambitious not of honor or preferment but of commercial success. And this ambition, Adams said, made them "sober, industrious, and frugal." "You will find among them," Adams claimed, "some elegance, perhaps, but more solidity; a little pleasure, but a great deal of business."

Epstein says very little about the philosophy of the framers, but he rightly associates commercial ambition with a belief in progress, and he rightly argues that "if the United States could be said to have . . . an underlying assumption governing its general behavior . . . then that assumption has been progress. . . ." Yet, according to Epstein, progress has recently come under attack; and commercial ambition "is increasingly associated in the public mind chiefly with human characteristics held to be despicable."

In its broad outlines, Epstein's case is clear and persuasive. He defends commercial ambition against an educated elite that generally regards it at the very least as vulgar, at the worst as immoral. Although many of those hostile to commerce today speak in Marxist language, what they appear to yearn for is not so much a revolutionary utopia as a pre-capitalist order in which the vulgar know their place, the acquisitive spirit is held in check, and the "thoughtful people"—to borrow a phrase from a leading political scientist—are deferred to. According to Epstein, the educated elite has nourished its essentially conservative bias—or, shall we say, its aristocratic pretensions—on a body of literature that has, during the past half century, tended to admire failure more than success. Yet whatever its source, the contempt for those "in trade" is unjustified, Epstein says, since men of commercial ambition possess many admirable traits.

In support of his argument, Epstein stocks his book with trenchant observations about the virtues of a society organized along commercial

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lines. "As for the artificial distinctions that money brings," he writes, "whatever may be said against them . . . they are nonetheless in the end more merciful than any other arrangement one can think of." Epstein also offers a wealth of anecdotes to show the many interesting forms that commercial ambition can take. And finally, he fills the book with capsule biographies of famous American entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial families—Benjamin Franklin, Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, Henry Luce, Joseph Kennedy, the Duponts, the Guggenheims—as well as of such leading American writers as Henry Adams, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Wallace Stevens. He also throws in a biography of Adlai Stevenson, and ends with an affecting portrait of "An Unknown Soldier" in the wars of commerce—a businessman of no particular distinction who is shown to possess the same virtues that John Adams praised some two hundred years ago.

The biographies generally are effective. Dwelling on the imagination of the great entreprenurs, Epstein suggests that for all their prudence and calculation, in some ways these men were creatures possessed. Preoccupied with their schemes and visions, they have had more in common with Captain Ahab than with George F. Babbitt. Epstein argues that for many entrepreneurs business has been enticing less because it has enabled them to better their condition than because it is an exciting and risky adventure—one that requires cunning, ruthlessness, imagination, and luck.

The anecdotes, which for the most part appear under a rubric called "Curiosity Shop," are less successful, and seem to be merely digressions. The book also suffers from stylistic lapses—prose that is overheated and sometimes corny. But a more serious failing is that both the anecdotes and the capsule biographies raise questions that are left dangling—questions, precisely, about the distinctions among different kinds of ambition: commercial, literary, political.

The desire to better one's condition—the desire that animates many businessmen—is not what fuels a person with literary ambition, which rather resembles heroic ambition—the desire to make one's name in the world, the desire to be worthy of one's forebears. Is there not something in this distinction that makes it inevitable that writers will look down upon men of commerce? And what about political ambition? The capsule biography of Adlai Stevenson seems out of place in a book dominated by powerful entrepreneurs and, for the most part, successful writers. Whatever his admirable qualities, surely Stevenson was not one of America's more interesting politicians. And as Epstein himself suggests, there was even something lackluster and dilettantish about the quality of his ambition.

Neglecting politics, Epstein neglects a great American subject. Although they praised men of commerce as necessary to the health and stability of the country, the framers thought the country would not

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flourish without men of political ambition—men who aspired, as they themselves did, to win lasting fame as public men of honor, prudence, and wisdom. Both Hamilton and Madison were animated by that love of fame, which Hamilton in *Federalist* 72 calls "the ruling passion of the noblest minds." And both would have agreed with Francis Bacon that the best kind of ambition involves achieving the respect of other public men: "He that seeketh to be eminent amongst able men, hath a great task; but that is ever good for the public."

To raise this issue is perhaps to ask Epstein to have been more ambitious than he has chosen to be. As it is, he has produced a generally eloquent and witty attack upon those who "cannot own up to their interest in success . . . lest they be thought pushing, acquisitive, vulgar." *Ambition* is a book both admirably free of cant and marked by what I would call critical generosity. For like the 18th-century defenders of the market, Epstein acknowledges that the company of commercial men may not be to one's liking. Still, "thinking about ambition," he says, "has caused me to disregard the notion that our final judgment about the men and women of history hangs on the question of whether we should like to dine with them." Commercial man may not be the finest flower of civilization, but we have learned in this century that to despise him is not only to despise prudence and moderation, but also to despise liberty.

Profiles in Courage

SOVIET DISSIDENTS: THEIR STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. By JOSHUA RUBENSTEIN. *Beacon Press. 304 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by MAURICE FRIEDBERG

IN TOTALITARIAN societies political dissidence is not, ordinarily, a result of extreme repression. On the contrary, it usually makes its appearance when conditions improve somewhat, thus giving rise to optimistic expectations. It is later, when these hopes for political reforms fail to materialize, that frustration and disenchantment set in, begetting in turn the first sprouts of loosely organized dissent. This has essentially been the pattern in the USSR in the three and a half decades since the end of World War II. There was no dissent in Stalin's Russia—any more than there was dissent in Hitler's Germany, and for analogous reasons. Stalin's era of police terror was succeeded, after the dictator's death in March 1953, by the heady episode of Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's crimes, which—not unexpectedly—gave rise to a wide variety of expectations. These hopes were particularly fervent among those who were among the prime targets—and victims—of Stalinist repression. While Khrushchev was still in power, these very different groups of the Soviet population waited patiently, confident that, after more pressing reforms, their turn would surely come.

In October 1964—eleven years after Stalin's death—Khrushchev was deposed by Brezhnev and Kosygin. From the very outset it became apparent that the two men would not be likely to continue with Khrushchev's reforms. And it was then that the various movements of dissent began to make their appearances one after another. Whatever their differences—and there were many—the common denominator was the conviction that their particular grievances were not likely to be satisfied by the authorities if no pressure were brought to bear on them.

The most important weapon in the dissidents' hands was the publicity their various causes received in the Western mass media. Western press, radio, and television were fascinated by the dissidents, and no wonder: only a few years earlier the existence of *any* Soviet citizens willing to disagree publicly with the authorities would have been unthinkable. So spellbound were the Western newsmen in Moscow by the activities of what was really a small number of people—

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their illegally circulated publications, the so-called *samizdat*, and above all their persecution by the authorities—that in their dispatches the activities of these few courageous, indeed reckless, men and women were magnified out of all proportion.

Over the years, many of the dissenters have been imprisoned and sent to labor camps, not a few confined to mental hospitals and subjected there to a particularly vicious type of torture by massive doses of tranquilizers. Many have been exiled or fired from their jobs. Some—like Alexandr Solzhenitsyn—have quite literally been moved by force to the West, taken there by plane under guard. Many more have been "encouraged" to leave, including recently the novelist Vladimir Voinovich. Still others have been allowed to travel to the West ostensibly for a visit, and then stripped of their Soviet citizenship without any pretense even of legal proceedings: that was the fate of the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, the lawyer Valery Chalidze, and most recently of the literary scholar Lev Kopelev and the novelist Vasili Aksyonov.

Repressive as all these measures have been, they are still—if judged by the standards of the Stalin era—relatively mild. Under Stalin, most of these people would have been summarily executed or deported to concentration camps to die. Indeed, one reason the dissidents have been handled comparatively gently is that the USSR has been eager to demonstrate to the West—and also, to a much lesser extent, to its own citizens—that Stalinism is a thing of the past.

THAT Soviet dissidents, though not numerous, represent a wide variety of causes is quite natural, considering the diversity of grievances and interests in the USSR, a vast and complex country inhabited by scores of racial, ethnic, and religious groups. In essence, Soviet dissenters fall into five main categories, with a great deal of overlapping—the cultural, those devoted to *particular social causes, the religious*, the ethnic, and the political. Briefly, the cultural dissenters are writers and painters who protest the Soviet authorities' restrictions on freedom of *artistic* (as distinct from political) expression. The two groups championing social causes are the trade unionists and the feminists. The first tried to organize an independent union about three years ago, while the feminists actually launched a journal named *Maria*. Religious dissenters include Lithuanian Roman Catholics and Russian Pentecostals, as well as dissident members of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Jews in the USSR are viewed as an ethnic group some of whose members are also adherents of the Jewish faith. Hence, the Jewish dissidents are both ethnic and religious in nature. The Jewish grievances are manifold. The Jews are the object of very strong anti-Semitic discrimination in higher education and employment, are refused even those few privileges the other faiths enjoy—such as the manufacture of religious articles, a religious journal, and the training of clergy—and are denied schools and other cultural facilities to which all ethnic groups are entitled. The other ethnic dissenters are Ukrainians, who protest the policy of Russification, and the Muslim Crimean Tatars who were deported from their ancestral lands during World War II and have never been allowed to return.

Finally, there are the political dissenters in the proper sense of the term. They span nearly the full spectrum of political opinion. There are some honest-to-goodness fascists and racists among them—such as the people who were behind journals like *The Word of the Nation* and *The People's Assembly (Veche)*. Closer to the center stand the conservative nationalists with authoritarian leanings, many of them also strongly religious. Their foremost representative is Solzhenitsyn, who now lives in Vermont. At the other end of the spectrum we find such anti-Stalinist Marxists as the Medvedev brothers, one of whom, Zhores, the biologist, is now in the West, while

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the other, Roy, is still in the USSR. And finally, there is the center of political dissent, the liberal wing that advocates, roughly speaking, a democratic society close to Western models. Its spokesman is Andrei Sakharov, the world-famous nuclear scientist now living in forced exile in a city off-limits to foreigners. Formerly the backbone of the most important *samizdat* journal, *The Chronicle of Current Events*, the democratic dissenters now rally around the Soviet Helsinki Watch Committee.

JOSHUA RUBENSTEIN's book is concerned solely with the democratic species of political dissent and also with those Jewish nationalist dissenters active in both movements. These two groups of dissidents have over the years attracted the most attention in the West, but they are also the ones whose ranks in the USSR have become decimated. A systematic application of the classic carrot-and-stick tactic has resulted in the arrest or exile of some of the democrats (most notably Sakharov) and the emigration of hundreds of others. On page 277 of the book we find a list of *forty-five* leading democratic and Jewish dissidents, all émigrés now, whose help Rubenstein generously acknowledges.

Aside from some generalities, Rubenstein offers little information regarding the democratic dissenters' goals. Also, there is little evidence in his book of research in published sources. These blemishes, however, are richly compensated for by his vivid and often gripping account of the heroic struggle of men and women who have sought, in post-Stalin Russia, to bring about a clean break with the country's repressive past and assure a recognition of man's right to freedom from fear and to a redress of injustice. That their cause has in recent years suffered severe setbacks should not be construed as its final defeat.

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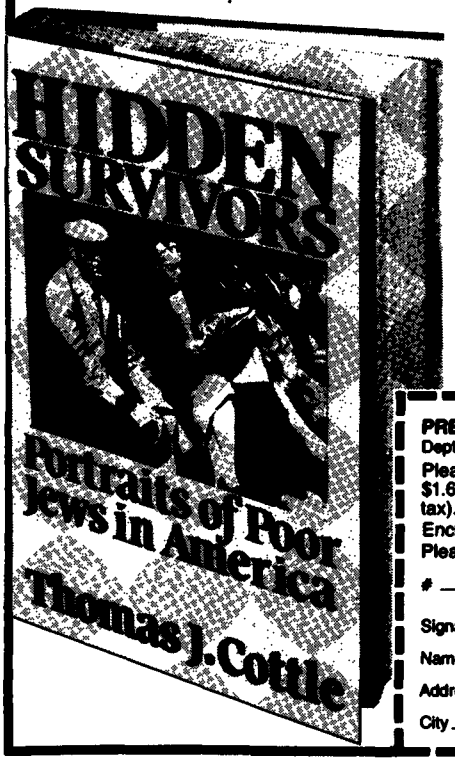

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Race & Society

WHITE SUPREMACY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN AMERICAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY. By GEORGE M. FREDRICKSON. *Oxford University Press. 356 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JACK N. RAKOVE

COMPARATIVE history is one of those approaches that scholars freely praise, rarely attempt, and often criticize in practice. The history of slavery and race, however, is perhaps the one field where the benefits of comparison have been most widely recognized. Beginning with Frank Tannenbaum's short but suggestive book, *Slave and Citizen* (1946), studies cast within the framework of the American hemisphere have generated valuable debates about differences in the legal status of slaves, attitudes toward miscegenation, and demography.

Can a comparison of white supremacy in America and South Africa prove equally fruitful? One immediate answer is that it should because modern South African apartheid and the Jim Crow regime of segregation that prevailed in the American South between the first and second Reconstructions provide an obvious basis for comparison. And indeed this is the premise on which George Fredrickson implies his study was initially launched. For, as he notes at the outset, more than any of the other multiracial societies that European expansion spawned, these two countries "have manifested over long periods of time a tendency to push the principle of differentiation by race to its logical outcome."

Yet on closer examination, Fredrickson later concludes, Jim Crow and apartheid prove too dissimilar "to sustain an elaborate comparison based on analogy." Where apartheid has been deemed essential to preserving the dominance of a shrinking white minority, the security of white control in the South never depended on segregation. The South African policy of "native segregation" seeks to prevent blacks from living near or even

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passing among whites except as whites require their presence as workers and servants. So rigid a form of geographical segregation has never arisen in the United States.

Apartheid justifies this physical separation with its theory of "separate development," which holds that each identifiable *volk*, white or black, should be enabled to pursue its particular destiny. While black Americans have fashioned their own folk culture, they also share—to an extent inconceivable in South Africa—many elements of the larger national culture. And although Jim Crow did strip the freedmen and their descendants of essential rights, their ultimate claim to citizenship could never be denied and it survived to provide the basis for the modern assault on segregation and discrimination. In South Africa, by contrast, blacks acquire political identity only in their "homelands," those impoverished reservations created to legitimate, however transparently, the essential doctrines of apartheid.

So the ultimate results and refinements of white supremacy cannot by themselves justify the comparison. Nor does the story depend simply on tracing the evolution of racist attitudes that the 17th-century settlers of both societies carried with them. For racism—defined not in the current sense of discrimination but more strictly as a belief in the inferiority of biologically defined groups—emerged only over time, as one element (not even the most important) within a larger cluster of conditions and attitudes generating white supremacist doctrines.

WHAT does make sustained comparison possible, Fredrickson suggests, is that both societies passed through common phases in the long-term development of these ideologies. The opening chapters of his book examine four aspects of this process: contacts with indigenous populations; the growth of racial slavery; attitudes toward miscegenation; and responses to the challenges to racial exploitation launched by Northern reformers and Republicans in this country and British officials and humanitarians in South Africa. In two final chapters, Fredrickson discusses more recent developments: the role of black labor in industrializing economies, and 20th-century forms of legal segregation.

Although these chapters get a bit distended chronologically, on the whole they serve their purpose well. Within each chapter Fredrickson makes a series of comparisons that are at once interesting and instructive. Specific problems of historical interpretation are succinctly appraised; relevant theories from other social sciences are gracefully invoked.

Yet the cumulative effect of all these comparisons is to make the reader skeptical about the whole enterprise. For when it comes to describing the South African and

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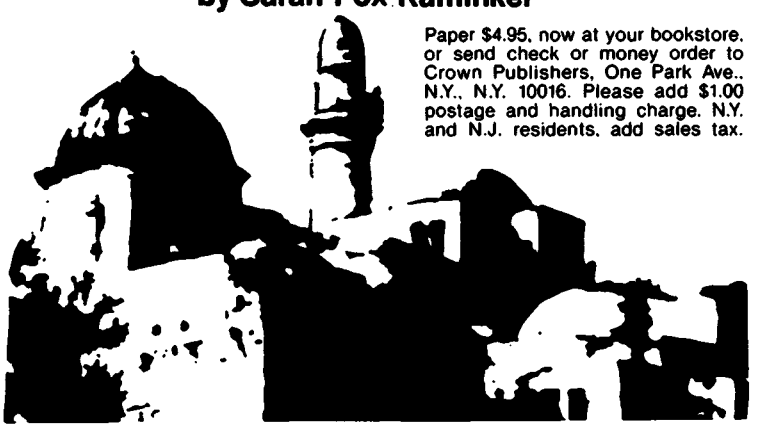

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American (or really Southern) variations on these themes, it becomes apparent that the two societies were always markedly different. Similarities there were, but these seem consistently less important than the contrasts, which turn not on matters of detail but on some of the most critical issues.

A study of white supremacy is necessarily an inquiry into the dominant group's sense of its cultural identity and communal purpose. Only in the 19th century did the Afrikaners begin to develop the kind of self-consciousness that the American colonists had fashioned relatively early. The initial Cape settlement was only a way-station on the route to the Dutch East Indies; it served none of the larger imperial purposes that the English colonies in America fulfilled. Nor did the dispossession of the natives produce equivalent results. Americans justified their westward migrations with the claim that a primitive and inefficient people were being properly supplanted by civilized, productive settlers carrying out a manifest national destiny. The trekboers who pushed beyond the Cape adopted the pastoral and even migratory patterns of the native Khoikhoi; they neither sought nor needed to project any sense of mission.

IN BOTH societies, Fredrickson argues, "the long experience of enslaving non-whites" constituted the most important source of white supremacist thought. But the American and South African forms of slavery differed radically. Without plantation slavery, the South could not have cultivated its profitable staples. Arid South Africa, lacking such crops, needed no plantations, and slavery was a convenience only. Other means of controlling labor proved equally effective and less expensive. Moreover, unlike the Americans, who enslaved only blacks, the Dutch drew their slaves from two racially distinct sources: Africans from Mozambique and Madagascar; Asians from India, Malaya, and the East Indies.

This last point also complicates the effort to compare American and South African responses to miscegenation. By 1700 the Americans had established their peculiarly rigid division between white and black, consigning the offspring of mixed relations to the subordinate group. By contrast, South African attitudes remained far more permissive well into the 19th century. Legal marriages with slaves or, more commonly, with the descendants of earlier mixed liaisons were long condoned. To a large, perhaps determining extent, Fredrickson argues, this reflected the demographic needs of a white minority and the absence of a powerful colonial ethos requiring the preservation of a traditional (white) social order. But it also reflected another factor that Fredrickson discusses but does not emphasize. Most mixed marriages involved white males and Asian or Eurasian women, whom whites perceived to be physically less different from themselves than Africans. There was thus a striking difference in the racial equations that whites in both societies found themselves solving.

In both societies, the elaboration of modern ideologies of white supremacy was essentially a 19th-century development, the result of external challenges to the patterns of racial exploitation that had by then matured. But again, the nature and response of the white master classes diverged sharply. The Boers, in fact, were hardly a master class at all. They had never exercised political authority much beyond their patriarchal households, never developed an articulate political ideology, never really learned how to cooperate with one another. What they had learned was how to exploit black labor. When the British (who displaced the Dutch in 1806) challenged this control, the Boers fled to establish free republics in the interior. The Great Trek and later conflicts with British authority finally fostered a sense of national identity. But Afrikaner ideology was crude at best, and required no sophisticated doctrine of race to justify a system of domi-

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nance based on security, convenience, and a hearty aversion to manual labor.

Southern planters, on the other hand, were a ruling class in every sense of the term. They were cohesive, self-conscious, articulate, and habituated to the exercise of power. When slavery was attacked, they ceased portraying it as a necessary evil but moved instead to justify it as a positive good on the theory that blacks were, by nature, otherwise incapable of working. Here was racism raised to the level of high social theory. And it was a theory that the white racial caste of the South would go to war to defend.

Although both the Boer free states and the South lost their struggles for sovereignty, the principles and mechanisms of white supremacy were not endangered. But the roles that blacks played in the changing economies of the two societies continued to diverge. The gold and diamonds that gave South Africa a modern economy could be profitably mined only with cheap African labor. American blacks, by contrast, were effectively excluded from the new industrial economy. Poor Southern whites and immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe provided all the cheap labor America needed.

Underlying all of these differences—of circumstance, environment, and history—one finds as well a final basis for describing Fredrickson's study as an exercise in contrasts. The simple language of the Declaration of Independence and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments has regularly provoked elaborate efforts to compromise, explain away, or resist the egalitarian commitments these documents propose. But the thrust of the egalitarian claim has nevertheless governed the development of American legal, constitutional, and social thought, and of our conceptions of civil rights, politics, and distributive justice. No such claim has ever troubled, much less influenced, the Afrikaners. And so, Fredrickson observes, even in comparing the post-Reconstruction South and modern South Africa, "it is clear in retrospect that the underlying constitutional and ideological imperatives pointed in opposite directions."

At every stage, then, the task of comparison emphasizes differences rather than similarities. At times, too, the difficulty of finding suitable units for comparison leads Fredrickson into some unusual juxtapositions. For example, the legal disabilities of blacks under Jim Crow are set against modern restrictions imposed on South African Coloreds. To find an American analogy for apartheid, Fredrickson offers an imaginary scenario in which conquered Indians remain a majority of the population but are kept on enlarged reservations as a pool of cheap labor.

AFTER all this, it is not so surprising to learn that Jim Crow and

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apartheid cannot be compared, or to conclude that the egalitarian commitments of the American Revolution and of Reconstruction did matter, or to recognize the persistent influence of geography and demography. The range and magnitude of these contrasts thus call into question the point of the comparison. Fredrickson has anticipated this objection. He writes not as a social scientist seeking to build some general model but as a historian pursuing his discipline's relentless inclination to examine the past for its diversity and complexity. In his introduction, he suggests that the principal value of his study should be to "illuminate *equally* the special features or particularities" of the two cases. And so he does, marvelously and often persuasively.

Yet one can still argue that such a study has to operate within certain limits. When too many variables explain too many variations, the value of comparison is diluted. The comparisons themselves remain consistently informative, consistently illuminating. But illumination is one thing, explanation another. For a comparative study to be useful as well as illuminating, it must identify factors that might otherwise be ignored and raise issues deserving further consideration.

On these grounds, the book seems less successful than one suspects Fredrickson initially hoped it would be. Few of his key arguments actually rest on comparative insights. They draw their strength instead, I believe, from another source. *White Supremacy* provides a judicious, perceptive, and dispassionate synthesis of the remarkably rich body of scholarship on American race relations that has appeared over the last two decades. To this it adds a deeply informative survey of the complex racial history of South Africa. Fredrickson's mastery of the literature on two societies, and his own talents as a historian, more than the comparison itself, are what make this book work.

Nor does Fredrickson make clear where this comparison of two societies hitherto rarely linked should carry us in the future. Conspicuously absent from this book is the sort of concluding chapter that it seems to require: a set of final judgments and further reflections capable of pulling together the complex themes it has so carefully developed and explaining their significance. Early reviewers have uniformly praised the sophistication of Fredrickson's comparisons, but they too have stopped short of identifying "the new problems of interpretation" that at the outset he promises to raise.

Once considered, then, the American-South African analogy seems to exhaust itself. It is for this reason that one may doubt whether *White Supremacy*, though an important book, will also prove an influential one.

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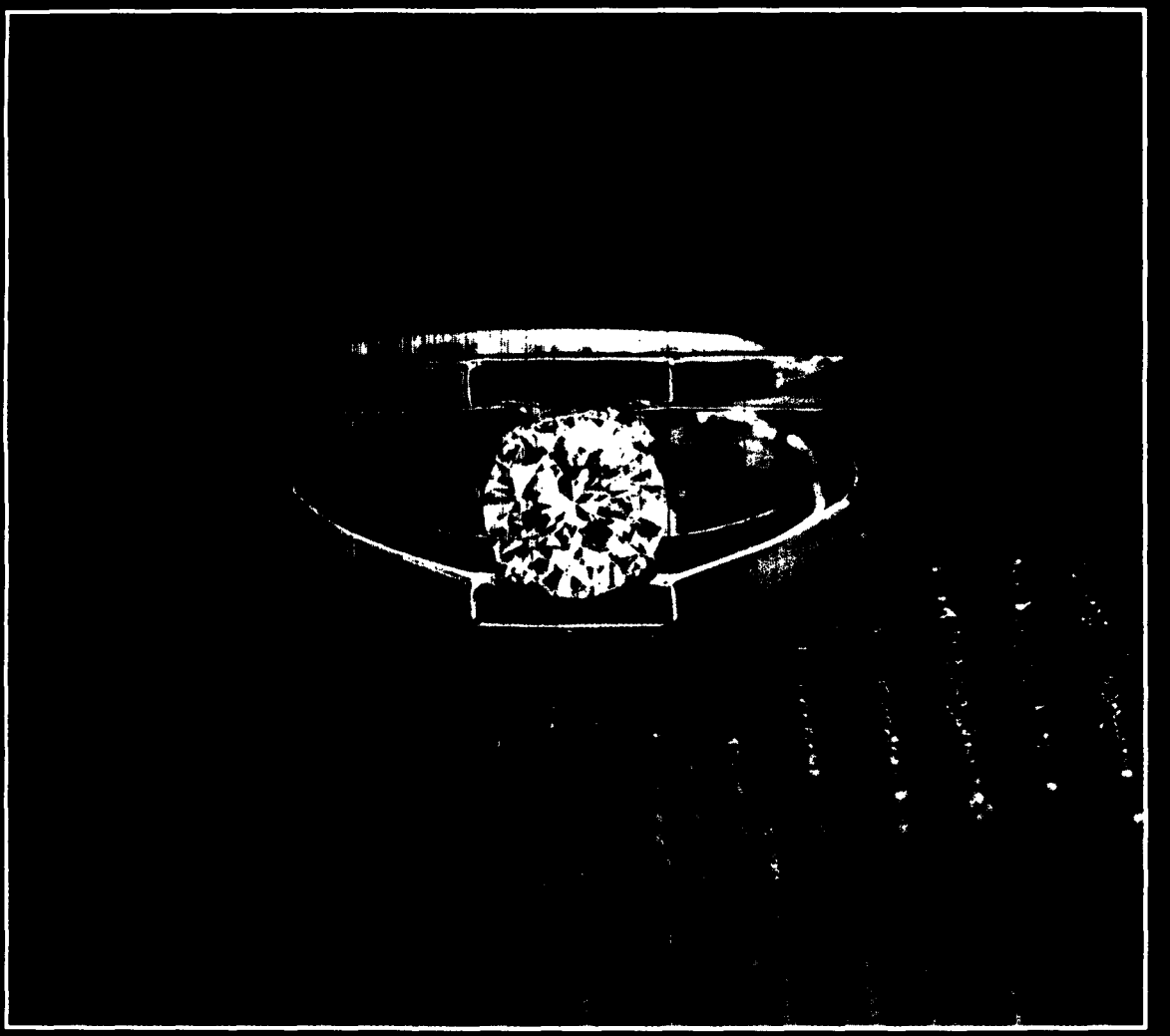

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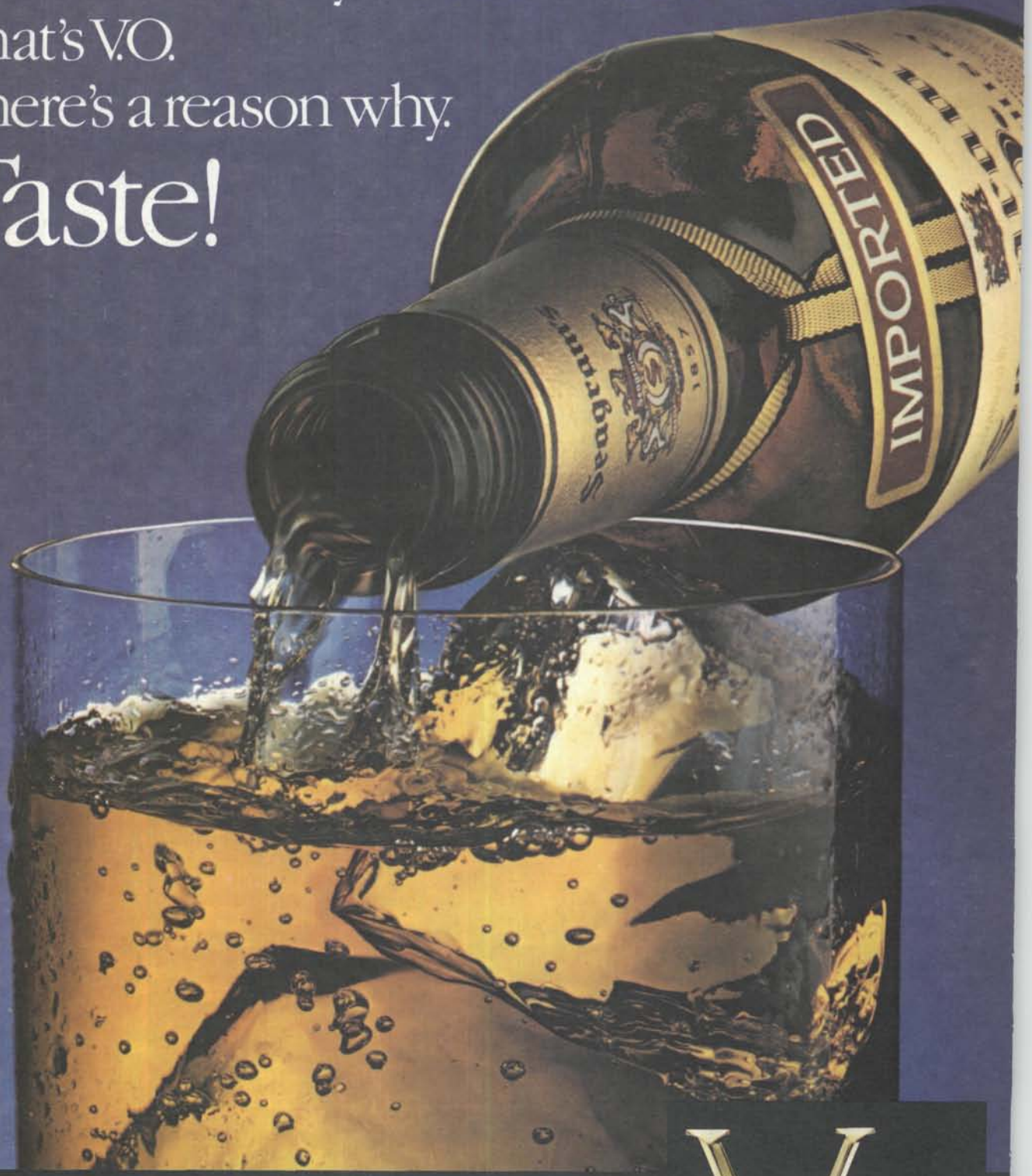

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